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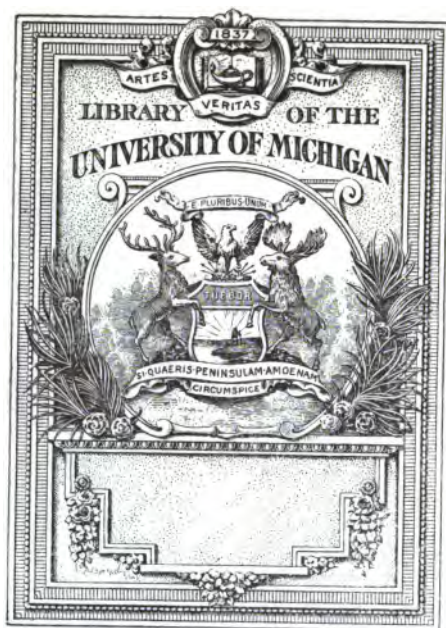
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HOW TO IMPROVE IT

REV. C. L. ^{*Wynne & Co.*} DRAWBRIDGE, M.A.
BY
AUTHOR OF "THE TRAINING OF THE TWIG," ETC.

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PREFACE

10-3-05-22.
WHEN rival religious ideals come into violent collision, two results always follow :—

1. Much temporary harm is done to religion.
2. A permanent enlargement of ideals takes place.

This book is concerned solely with the latter. I am very much indebted to those from whose works I have quoted.

HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

October, 1906

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HOW TO IMPROVE IT

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE work of the Church may be divided into two departments, and labelled respectively, (1) Preventive, and (2) Curative. Or one may classify Spiritual activities under the two heads:—(1) Positive, and (2) Negative work.

1. Positive: to set up the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.
2. Negative: to combat the spread of secularism, scepticism, indifference, and sin,—with all their attendant ills.¹

Of these two, the positive really includes the negative, because the very best method of opposing the spread of irreligion, is to actively propagate

¹ There are, of course, many semi-secular duties which fall to the lot of the Church, but these may be included under the two above-mentioned heads.

religion. The most satisfactory method of combating doubt, is to build up faith. The best kind of apologetics is the saintly life. The best antidote to sin is godliness.

We may say, then, that the great work of Christendom begins and ends with setting up the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

Having considered briefly *What* has to be done, it remains to be seen *How* to do it. Upon whom has the influence of the Church to be brought to bear? Well, the human race may be divided into two halves, each of which should be considered separately, viz.,

(1) Adults.

(2) Children.

The former are comparatively unimpressionable, and "uneducable". The latter are pre-eminently the reverse. In fact the wonderful "educability" of the young of the human species is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the race. By way of contrast compare the chicken, which, at the moment of birth is almost as independent, and very nearly as intelligent, as it will ever be. On the other hand it possesses very little capacity to learn anything new. Soon after birth it knows pretty nearly everything that it will ever know. It is practically incapable of instruction. The human infant, on the contrary, is

born very helpless, and knowing hardly anything. He has everything to learn, but he possesses an absolutely unique capacity for doing so.

Another of the chief characteristics of mankind is the great *length* of the period of dependence, and "impressibility."

The third main characteristic of mankind is, consequently, the great extent of the demands made upon adults by the long and complete dependence of their offspring. Parenthood is a valuable education, because the very best method of learning anything is to have to teach it. The adult is not easily taught in any other way, but he inevitably learns a very great deal if he tries, conscientiously, to teach his children.

Bishop Dupanloup used to say:—"It is my profound conviction that the world would be saved if we devoted ourselves to the children". He also maintained that he, as an adult, owed everything to his catechetical work;—"Everything for my soul, everything for my ministry, everything for my heart, I would even say everything for my career",¹ has been acquired in the effort to teach children.

The moral, spiritual, and intellectual development of mankind has been advanced chiefly by the two facts that:—(1) to a great extent each child begins

¹ "The Ministry of Catechizing," p. 106.

religious education, because undenominationalism¹ (tending towards secularism) is gradually becoming established in Public Elementary Schools. Moreover sectarian bitterness, which is one of the greatest enemies of spirituality, is the chief result—so far—of all the time and thought lavished upon the (so-called) Education Bill of 1906.

Now the religious education of some 20,000,000 children is a gigantic undertaking. It cannot be accomplished without a considerable amount of machinery. It cannot be adequately carried on by isolated individuals acting independently of one another. The religious culture of the children of Great Britain cannot be successfully achieved without system, method, and co-operation. In short, a considerable amount of organization is imperatively necessary. In order to improve the spiritual culture of the young, the Church must carefully overhaul the machinery at her disposal. At the present time the religious education of the children is supposed to be

¹ Undenominational theology is the residuum which is supposed to be left after every sect has freely eliminated everything to which it objects. There are more than 300 sects which are entitled to take part in this elaborate process of exhaustion ; amongst them may be mentioned the Unitarians. I do not know what the result is in theology, but in natural philosophy the undenominational doctrine with regard to matter is that opinions differ as to whether it exists, or not. In actual practice however the Undenominational creed of any school-area depends upon the number of sects which take an active part in the process of elimination. .

carried on by various independent agencies. Each of these works, for the most part, without any reference whatever to the operations of the others. There are for instance :—

The Parents.
The Sponsors.
The Day Schools.
The Sunday Schools.
Children's Services.

As I have said, each of these acts more or less independently of all the others. Moreover, each leaves undone much of the work, under the erroneous supposition that the others are doing it. Parents e.g. assume, without enquiry, that teachers of various kinds are supplying that part of the religious culture of their children which is omitted in the home. The teachers assume, without justification, that parents are providing that part of religious education which is not included in the school curriculum. The same may be said of the other independent agencies. Meanwhile the net result of the several disjointed efforts of the above-mentioned distinct agencies, displays its obvious deficiency in the fact that so many adults are more or less indifferent to, and even hostile to religion ; and many others are ignorant of what they are supposed to have been taught while they were children.

Since writing the above, I have questioned the top class of lads in a Church Sunday School. They were a typical lot of boys. I endeavoured to ascertain what were their ideas, if any, with regard to Baptism;¹ because the Church's scheme of salvation begins at that point. I discovered that (with perhaps one exception) none of them was either interested in the subject, or instructed with regard to it. One, a lad who attended a Provided (i.e. Undenominational) School, said with the emphasis of intense conviction:—"What is the use of pouring water on a fellow's head?" He added, however, that he had been baptised. Another boy, who had been educated in a Church Day School (as well as in a Church Sunday School, and in a Church family) remarked proudly and cheerfully:—"I 'aven't been christened". With perhaps one exception, all the other lads in the class displayed neither interest in, nor knowledge of, the subject. Of course, it may be said that too much importance has been attached to Baptism, and that consequently the above-mentioned boys deserve all credit for their attitude towards the Church's antiquated theology. This is not the place for anything in the nature of a theological discussion upon this point.² My present contention is that, quite apart

¹ My subject was neither Infant Baptism, nor Adult Baptism, but Baptism itself.

² I suppose that all Christians attach some kind of importance to Baptism.

from the importance (or otherwise) which one may attach to Baptism, it is obvious that boys who have been "taught" that particular scheme of salvation (which begins with, and is built up upon, a belief in baptism), and who, at the *end* of their school life, know little, and care less, about that particular scheme of salvation, demonstrate the inadequacy of their religious training. If they do not know this one scheme of salvation—which they are supposed to have learned—what are they likely to know about any other scheme which they are not supposed to have been taught? As long as the human race remains human, it will need some kind of "scheme of salvation"—some measure of systematised religious thought. About half these lads that I refer to belong to a Church Day School, and, consequently, "know the Catechism". As I have remarked, I do not mention this particular class of boys on the ground that they have been exceptionally badly instructed, but, on the contrary, because in my experience their knowledge is fairly typical.¹ What will they know about religion in later life, when they have had time to forget what little they have actually learned?

The results obtained by the sects are, according to

¹ Of course, in order to discover what children really know one must question them (not their teachers). It is necessary, too, to ask questions which are "not in the book". If I had asked "What is your name?" they would no doubt have replied "N or M".

themselves, quite as unsatisfactory. For instance, Professor Peake, writing in a book called "Reform in Sunday School Teaching" (published by James Clarke in 1906) says:—"For half my life I was in close contact with the Sunday School"; and (on p. 17) speaking of the results which he had observed he says:—"The fact is the whole thing is a confused jumble in their (the children's) minds." He is criticising Nonconformist Sunday Schools, i.e. those that use the "International Lessons". He is most emphatic in his condemnation of the Lessons which are in general use amongst Nonconformists.

The boys and girls educated in the great public schools are certainly no better informed. Some years ago the then Dean of Winchester, referring to a conversation which he had with the Head of Cheltenham Ladies' College, said:—"She has under her eye about seven hundred girls of the gentlefolk kind. She asked me whether I was aware of the incredible ignorance in religious matters of the children of the wealthier classes, and said she was daily more and more horrified at the discoveries she made. And I feel convinced that if we all had her means of discovering the darkness of the land, we should also feel as much scared as she did. We are waking up to our shortcomings in this field of work".¹

¹ Quoted from the "Church Sunday School Magazine".

The prevalence of indifference, and scepticism, to-day is the result (not of chance, but) of definite causes, of which the nature of religious education is the chief. The fault lies not merely with the one section of the religious world, but with every section. The parents and voters of to-morrow are the exceedingly "educable" children who are at school to-day. Moreover, these children are the most refining influence in the homes of those who, for the most part, are hardly open to the spiritual ministrations of the Church, directly. The latter have drifted away from "the Churches". The Christianity of to-morrow will depend, very largely, upon the degree of spiritual culture which the children of to-day are receiving. There is a growing tendency for "the Churches" to lose touch with "the people," that is to say with those who have left the Sunday School. I say that this tendency is growing; and one has no reason to suppose that it will cease to do so as long as the cause, or causes, which produce the tendency remain active.

The material upon which we have to work—the trustful, inquisitive soul of the child—is the very symbol of hope and encouragement. "Wax to receive", the soul of the child is "marble to retain" impressions. First impressions are invaluable. But the impressionable age does not last for ever, and the

result of our efforts to impress it leaves very much to be desired. In other words the means employed are very unsatisfactory, and they are becoming gradually worse, instead of better. Meanwhile the child's secular education is being steadily improved. The contrast between the two is a constant source of amusement to the children on Sunday; and on Monday they look back to the previous day's teaching with contempt. It is not only the quality of the teaching which they despise, but the subject taught also comes in for a share of their criticism. They are apt to estimate religion by studying its exponents; and they unconsciously form their ideas of God's government of the world by watching the government of the Sunday School by those whom they are taught to regard as God's representatives.

PARENTS

AS I have said, the religious life of the generation which is now at school, will depend very largely upon how far those who are responsible for their education are dealing with their spiritual culture. Those who are primarily responsible are, of course, the parents. Bishop Dupanloup, in his "Ministry of Catechizing" (p. 51), writes thus on the subject of religious education in the home :—

"In other days, the family was deeply Christian, religious habits, impressions, manners and laws reigned on the domestic hearth, the young child, surrounded from his cradle by holy examples, was, under the eyes of his father and mother, in the midst of his brothers and sisters, naturally brought up with a respect for religion ; everything he learned, all his tastes, even all his instincts, were born and developed under the rule of faith, and fervent piety ; it was the very air he breathed, and like a cast on which his soul was formed and modelled, from his tenderest years. But now the times, and the condition of things, are much changed ! In the present day,

families who can be called thoroughly and deeply Christian are very rare! I repeat it, making all needful allowance for holy and glorious exceptions; but, speaking in a general way, where shall we now find the Christian families of other days? Ancient manners, ancient habits, the ancient Christian life, where is it all? Is it in the great worldly cities? Is it in our smaller towns? Is it in our melancholy country villages? Is it among the poor?"

The Bishop was speaking of the state of affairs (not in Great Britain, but) in France, where the education given in Public Elementary Schools is purely secular. The curriculum in our Public Elementary Schools is not merely secular. But for the following reasons the religious education of British children by their parents, leaves something to be desired by those of us who are Christians:—

1. A considerable proportion of parents are wholly indifferent to religion, and many are actively hostile¹ to Christianity.

2. Many parents who are interested in religion do not know what to believe, and therefore do not know what to teach.

¹ The large sale of rationalistic newspapers, and of cheap books which are aggressively hostile to Christianity, display to some extent the widespread success of militant secularism. Then, again, one may ask what proportion of the labour members (of Parliament) are Secularists? In other words what is the religious position of the majority of working-men voters—i.e. of King Demos?

3. Many of those who are themselves religious leave the spiritual culture of their children to others, at least so far as instruction is concerned.

4. Few parents have learned *how* to teach, even if they do know what to teach. The result is not merely negative (i.e. absence of learning on the part of the children), but parental ignorance results sometimes in positive harm. Bungling efforts may do more harm than good. The children of clergymen, of dissenting ministers, and of other very religious people, are not necessarily better than other children; nor do they by any means always grow up better men and women. Quite frequently the opposite result follows; and yet there is a great deal of truth in what we have been told about the immense influence of heredity and environment. How is one to account for the fact that home teaching is not more effective? Why are the results frequently in an inverse ratio to the efforts expended? Why do religious parents often do more harm than good when they lay themselves out to make their children religious? In what ways do they defeat their own object, and overreach themselves? What is wrong with the environment of such religious homes? How is it that the law of heredity seems to be falsified in so many cases? This is by no means an imaginary difficulty, but a very real and practical one.

Let me quote Herbert Spencer : perhaps he will be able to throw some light upon the subject. He says :—

“ If by some strange chance not a vestige of us descended to the remote future save a pile of our school books, or some college examination papers, we may imagine how puzzled an antiquary of the period would be on finding in them no sign that the learners were ever likely to be parents. ‘ This must have been the curriculum for their celibates ’, we may fancy him concluding : ‘ I perceive here an elaborate preparation for many things, but I find no reference whatever to the bringing up of children. They could not have been so absurd as to omit all training for this gravest of responsibilities. Evidently, then, this was the school-course of one of their monastic orders. ’ . . .

“ Is it not monstrous that the fate of a new generation should be left to the chances of unreasoning custom, impulse, fancy—joined with the suggestion of ignorant nurses, and the prejudiced counsel of grandmothers ? If a merchant commenced business without any knowledge of arithmetic and book-keeping, we should exclaim at his folly, and look for disastrous consequences. Or if, before studying anatomy, a man set up as a surgical operator, we should wonder at his audacity and pity his patients. But that parents should begin the difficult task of rearing children without ever having given a thought to the

principles—physical, moral, or intellectual¹—which ought to guide them, excites neither surprise at the actors nor pity for their victims.”

He goes on to say, “Watch the average mother’s method of dealing with the unfolding human character committed to her charge. See her profoundly ignorant of the phenomena with which she has to deal, undertaking to do that which can be done but imperfectly even with the aid of the profoundest knowledge. She knows nothing about the nature of the emotions, their order of evolution, their functions, or where use ends, and abuse begins. She is under the impression that some of the feelings are wholly bad, which is not true of any one of them; and that others are good, however far they may be carried, which is also not true of any one of them. And then, ignorant as she is of the structure she has to deal with, she is equally ignorant of the effects produced on it by this or that treatment. What can be more inevitable than the disastrous results we see hourly arising? Lacking knowledge of mental phenomena, with their cause and consequence, her interference is frequently more mischievous than absolute passivity would have been.”²

According to the authority whom I have just quoted, the reason why parents so often fail is not that they do not do their best, but because they do not know how

¹ And, one may add, *Spiritual*.

² “Education,” p. 24.

to set to work. In spite of the opinions of Herbert Spencer and Bishop Dupanloup, there can be no doubt that parental influence will always be an exceedingly important factor, for good or ill, in the spiritual culture of the child. The home environment can never cease to be a very powerful element in education. It is equally obvious that the parent does not always know how to act wisely. It follows that if the Church can do anything to improve the home influence, she must not overlook so important a part of her opportunity. We will consider this matter again, later on. At present I would merely point out that, under the circumstances, it is easy to leave too much to the parents. Until the parents make a very real effort to do what is required of them, and until they *know how to do it*, the Church must somehow supply the deficiencies of the religious training given at home. This must not be done in such a way, however, as to make the parents feel that their responsibility (with regard to their children's religious education) has been taken over entirely by the Church. Some parents are apt to make this fatal mistake. Of course, nothing can take the place of home influence. *Co-operation* between the parents, and the other religious teachers of the child, is what is needed. There is very considerable room for improvement in this respect.

SPONSORS

THE other day when in a little country village near London, I was informed that a certain religious communion (not the Church of England) paid parents (who did not belong to that communion) half a crown a head for every child baptised. Whether the story was true or not (and I have heard it in widely separated parts of England) it will serve to introduce Bishop Gore's remark on the subject of Infant Baptism. He says :—

“ The Church does not baptise infants indiscriminately. She requires sponsors for their religious education ; and the sponsors represent the responsibility of the Church for the infants who are being baptised. It is not too much to say that to baptise infants without real provision for their being brought up to know what their religious profession means, tends to degrade a sacrament into a charm. On this point we need the most serious reflection.”¹

¹ See introduction by the Bishop of Birmingham to the Bishop of Manchester's book, “ Pastors and Teachers”. The former Bishop is High Church ; the latter is Low Church, and the points upon which they agree are accepted by the Broad Church.

Let me illustrate the obviousness of the Bishop's contention. What would one think of a missionary in Central Africa if he baptised all the children of a village when the parents were away from home? Or what would be said of a priest who offered half a dozen glass beads to every heathen mother who would allow her child to be christened? How much difference would their baptism make to the eternal spiritual welfare of the children thus baptised? The problem is one which needs common sense, rather than theological training, for its solution.

The rubric at the commencement of the Baptismal Service runs thus :—"There shall be for every Male-child to be baptised two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for every Female, one Godfather and two Godmothers." And at the end of the Service, the clergyman is instructed to turn to the Sponsors and remind them of their duties :—

Then all standing up, the Priest shall say to the Godfathers and Godmothers this Exhortation following :—

FORASMUCH as this Child hath promised by you his sureties to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him; ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession, he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better ye shall call upon him to hear Sermons; and chiefly ye shall provide

that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health ; and that this Child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life ; remembering always that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession ; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him ; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptised, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness ; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.

Then shall he add and say :—

Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

Theoretically this arrangement is excellent. But theory when divorced from practice, is a snare and a delusion. The question therefore arises, how does the Sponsorial arrangement work out in practice ?

In the case of the poor :—(1) One can very seldom get the proper number of Sponsors. (2) Those whom one does secure are nearly always the parents of the infant. (3) Even when some Sponsor (other than the parents) does come forward, it is very rarely indeed that he has the very slightest intention of

teaching the child anything whatever, when it grows old enough to receive instruction. In short, the vast majority of God-parents do not in any way assist in the religious education of their God-children. They do not attempt to do so.

Now the Sponsors are the representatives—not of the parents, but—of the Church. It follows that if God-parents do not attempt to fulfil the obligations of their office, those obligations must devolve upon Christ's Church (which the Sponsors represent). We will consider this subject more in detail later on. At present I would merely remind the reader that the Church (not the Clergy merely, but the whole Church)—must accept the responsibility of educating the child in the Christian religion. It is the teaching of the Church that the "Body of Christ" is responsible for all the members. It is also an obvious truism that the fate of the Church is largely bound up in that of her members. If the latter fall away, one by one, what will become of the Body? This is a question of practical politics; as well as a religious problem.

In the past the Church was the sole educator of the children. In those days therefore every one was a Christian and a Churchman. We do well to be proud of this fact of ancient Church History, but it is ancient history. The Church has a present, and a

future, as well as a past. The important problem of our day is not "What did the Church do formerly"? but "What is the Church doing now?" How is she dealing with facts as they face us to-day, when the State has taken control of education"? What Church History are we making to-day? What Church History are we handing on to posterity? To have had a glorious past is not sufficient. Greece, Egypt, China, India, Persia, each can boast of a great past, but not one of them has a very glorious present. The Church History of the moment! What of that?

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A BOOK was published in 1900 by Longmans, Green, and Co., containing a course of lectures delivered in New York on the subject of Religious Education. One of these lectures was delivered by Professor Nicholas Murray Butler, Ph.D. (Professor of Philosophy and Education in Columbia University, U.S.A.), upon the subject of the "Religious Problem in America". I venture to avail myself of the kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., to quote from the above-mentioned lecture, because an authoritative pronouncement upon that subject is of very obvious interest and importance. He says:—

"The separation of religious training from education as a whole, is the outgrowth of Protestantism and of Democracy. A people united in professing a religion which is ethnic or racial, or a nation giving adhesion to a single creed, or to one ecclesiastical organization, always unite religious training with the other elements of education, and meet no embarrassment or difficulty in so doing. During the undis-

puted dominance of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, education not only included religious training as a matter of course, but it was almost wholly confined to religious training. Theology was the main interest of the Middle Ages, and the theological interest caused religious training to permeate, and subordinate whatever instruction was given in other subjects. Music was taught, that the Church services might be well rendered. Arithmetic and astronomy were most useful in fixing the Church Festivals and the calendar. With the advent of the Protestant Reformation all this was changed. Religion was still strenuously insisted upon as a subject of study, but the other subjects of instruction became increasingly independent of it, and were gradually accorded a larger share of time and attention for themselves alone. Protestantism, however, would not by itself have brought about the secularization of the school, as it exists to-day in France and in the United States. Democracy, and the conviction that the support and control of education by the State is a duty, in order that the State and its citizens may be safeguarded, have necessarily forced the secularization of the school. Under the influence of the Protestant Reformation, and that of the modern scientific spirit, men broke away from adherence to a single creed, or to a single ecclesiastical organization, and formed diverse sects, groups, parties, or churches, differing in many details from each other—the differences, I

X

X regret to add, being far more weightily emphasized than the more numerous and more important points of agreement. When the State-supported school came into existence, this state of religious diversity found expression in dissatisfaction with the teaching, under State auspices, of any one form of religious belief. The first step towards the removal of this dissatisfaction was to reduce religious teaching to the lowest possible terms; and these were found in the reading of the Bible, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the singing of a devotional hymn at the opening of the daily school exercise. But even this gave rise to complaint. Discussions arose as to whether a single version of the Bible must be used in these readings, or whether any version, chosen by the reader, might be read. A still more extreme view insisted that the Bible itself was a sectarian book, and that the non-Christian portion of the community, no matter how small numerically, were subjected to a violation of their liberties and their rights, when any portion of the public funds was used to present Christian doctrine to school children, even in this merely incidental way. The view that the State-supported schools must refrain absolutely from exerting any religious influence, however small, is one which has found wide favour among the American people. It has led to more or less sweeping provisions in State constitutions and in statutes against sectarian instruction of any kind at public expense.

"It is in this sense, and for substantially the reason adduced, that the American public school is secular, and that it can give, and does give, attention to four of the five elements of civilization, science, literature, art and institutional life—but none to the fifth element—religion.

"In France, the great democratic nation of Europe, the case is quite similar. The famous law of March 28th, 1882, excluded religious instruction from the public schools, and put moral and civic training in its stead. M. Ribière, in defending this provision before the Senate, used almost the exact language later employed by the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, U.S.A. He held that the elementary school, maintained by the State, open to all, could not be used to teach the doctrines of any sect; that it must be neither religious nor anti-religious, but wholly secular,—neutral. M. Paul Bert, who presented the measure to the Chamber of Deputies, pointed out that the 'religious neutrality' of the school was the logical outcome of the principle of the freedom of the individual conscience.

"This, then, is the condition of affairs in the United States and in France, as regards religious training in education. The influence first of Protestantism, and then of Democracy, has completely secularized the school. The school, therefore, gives an incomplete education. The religious aspect of civilization, and the place and influence of religion in

the life of the individual, are excluded from its view. This is the first important fact to be reckoned with."

In Germany, however, two forms of religious education are endowed in the Public Elementary Schools, viz., Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. Professor Charles De Garmo, Ph.D. of Cornell University (U.S.A.) writes :—

"Probably in no other country in the world is the religious instruction so systematically and thoroughly given as in Germany. The principal function of the German school is officially declared to be the making of God-fearing, patriotic, self-supporting citizens. The Germans would no more think that religion could be omitted from the programme of instruction, than that mathematics or languages could be left out. Every teacher in that country receives religious training for his work, although not every teacher gives religious instruction in the schools. This is usually assigned to those who are best fitted by temperament, and acquirements, to impart it."¹

In Germany the religious difficulty does not exist, either in politics or in education, because every German is supposed to be either a Lutheran or a Roman Catholic, and both forms of theology are endowed in State Schools. But in Italy, the centre

¹ "Principles of Religious Education," p. 57.

of Roman Catholicism, the education provided by the State is purely secular. Here in England, although there has never been any religious difficulty *in the schools*, there is apparently insuperable difficulty *outside* the schools, on the subject of religious education. The parents and children are either perfectly satisfied with the dual system, or wholly indifferent to it. In every denominational school there are many little Dissenters who voluntarily attend denominational instruction, and do not take advantage of the conscience clause. For reasons which they regard as adequate the said children prefer not to attend the undenominational school, just round the corner. But the problem brought forward by the Dissenters in the so-called "Education"¹ Bill of 1906 has raised a difficulty which is not likely to leave things as they are.

The Sunday School Union, which is, as I have said, Undenominational, has just issued a book entitled "Religious Education". Let me quote what the author writes on page 84 :—

"The Nonconformist will not concede more than undenominational teaching, the Anglican and Roman Catholic will not accept less than denominational training. Is it desirable that the decision of the

¹ The problem dealt with by the Bill is not education, but the curtailing of the curriculum so far as regards religion.

issue should be taken out of the hands of those who have decided convictions on the question, and should be left to the arbitrament of the multitude of citizens who, indifferent to these differences themselves, would wish to end the controversy by some compromise? Must religious convictions on both sides be trampled upon? Or, is not the wiser and better course to withdraw the question of *religious education* altogether from the region of politics, in which a majority of votes, on whichever side it fell, would inflict religious injustice?"

He then proceeds to advocate secular education in all State Schools. Ever since the days of Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, Nonconformists have maintained that Religion should not be taught by servants of the State. They have contended that day-school teachers should not be required, nor even allowed, to teach religion. (Of course, if they volunteered to do so, *out of school hours*, that would be a different matter.) Dissenters have never been much in favour even of undenominational teaching in State Schools. In many Board School areas where Nonconformists are in the majority, they have succeeded in wholly eliminating religious education from the School curriculum. "In Cardigan, for example, out of 75 schools there are 60 in which no religious education of any kind is given. In Carmarthen no religious

education is given in 69 out of 104 schools." I have quoted the above from the "Times" report of the speech made in the House of Lords by the Archbishop of Canterbury on July 26th, 1906. The Archbishop took his figures from the Government Blue-book on "The Regulations for Religious Instruction in Council Schools."

Dr. Horton, who was until recently President of the Free Church Council, writes (in 1905):—

"The only method—so the genuine Free Churchman argues—by which the educational problem can be solved, and the rising generation can be religiously trained, is that of remitting to the schools the function of general and secular instruction which they are capable of discharging, and of resuscitating in the conscience of parents and guardians the responsibility for the religious training of their children which they alone are able to give."¹

The Secularists (for very different reasons) are also averse to religious education being given in Public Elementary Schools.

The man-in-the-street, when he is neither a Dissenter nor a Secularist, but is merely indifferent to dogmatic religion, is also apt to "cut the Gordian knot", which he calls sectarian bitterness, and to vote for purely secular education.

¹ "The Child and Religion," p. 280.

I quote the following from the "Birmingham Diocesan Magazine" for September (1906). It expresses the opinion of a great High Churchman. The Bishop of Birmingham, writing with reference to the Education Bill and the West Riding appeal, says:—

"The seriousness of the situation is increased by the discovery that if the decision is not carried to the House of Lords and reversed, undenominational religion already, to a certain extent, holds the position of the established religion in the State School, in the sense that it is the only kind of religious teaching which the local authority is required to pay for, if it authorizes its being given. . . .

"We may see (he adds) the conversion of many Churchmen to the solution of the religious difficulty advocated in the House of Commons by Mr. Chamberlain."

It remains to be seen how far the friends of definite religious instruction in the day school will succeed in influencing the State to make some provision for it in the national educational system.

Obviously, the importance of the Church's efforts to teach religion to children must increase in the same ratio as the secularisation of State education. Whether universal secularism eventually becomes the rule in our Public Elementary Schools, or not, it is evident that the Church should be prepared for the

worst. How about our second line of defence? What is the condition of our auxiliary machinery for religious education? What other agencies have we for carrying on the spiritual culture of our children? If, after the present fight is over, we find ourselves and our teaching excluded from all day schools, shall we have any adequate alternative machinery to fall back upon? By all means let us fight for justice, and for what we already have, but let us also have something to fall back upon. In addition to grumbling at the Government, let us do something more religious, more dignified, and more practically useful.

It is exceedingly easy to grumble at the inadequacy of the religious education of the children, as it is at present, and as it is fast becoming; but it is at once more difficult, and more useful, to make up our minds as to how it can best be improved. It is all very well to criticize the share which parents, sponsors, and the undenominational schools take in the spiritual culture of the children; but the all-important thing is to *do something to improve the state of affairs*. Let us then consider what agencies we possess for carrying on the religious education of children, other than those already mentioned. We must of course first inspect the existing machinery, before we set to work to improve it.

CATECHISMS *v.* SUNDAY SCHOOLS

BEFORE dealing with the subject of Sunday Schools, and "Catechisms,"¹ individually, let us consider the relationship between them.

These two institutions are rivals. Let me quote from No. III of the "Parson's Handbook Series". Rev. Newland-Smith, in "The Catechist's Handbook", after advocating the formation of "Catechisms" (Children Services of the French type), explains how he would deal with the existing Sunday Schools :—

"Would it not be wiser to substitute quiet games, varied by the reading aloud of story-books, in place of the little sermons delivered by the average Sunday School teacher to his class ?

"Such games as Draughts, Halma, Reversi, or the breathless interest of removing, with steady hand, light ivory slips from a heap, without disturbing the rest, commonly known as Spellicans, will employ

¹ The fact that the word Catechism means two wholly different things, is very confusing to those who are not familiar with the subject. In this article I am referring to the elaborate catechetical services designed and perfected by the French Roman Catholics.

them happily without dissipating their mental energy. Still more valuable are boxes of cardboard letters, sold under the title of 'Word-making and Word-taking.'

"At first, no doubt, we should encounter a certain amount of misgiving on the part of the teachers, and possibly of parents, but, as a matter of fact, the principle is already established in many Sunday Schools, in which the teachers, when they have exhausted the subject of their lesson, fill up the remaining time with the reading of Hans Andersen. The above proposal is but an extension of the principle."¹

The above may, or may not, be exceedingly humorous, but it does not strike me as being very wise, or practically helpful. Bishop Gore says with regard to the competition between the "Catechism" and the Sunday School:—

"It is very possible, in enthusiasm for this wonderful method (of S. Sulpice), to destroy the organization of the Sunday School, in places where there is no real prospect of substituting for it any more excellent way. Before the new 'Catechism' is introduced it is most necessary to count the cost."²

And Bishop Knox remarks:—

"I am convinced that anything like a true adoption of the method of S. Sulpice can only be obtained

¹ Pp. 155 and 156.

² Introduction to "Pastors and Teachers".

by surrender of the Sunday School, and by the appointment of a clergyman on the staff who is told off to catechising as his special work. In other words for most parishes it is impracticable."¹

In order to compare the relative merits of the two systems one ought, in the first place, to decide what is the chief end and aim of religious education. Is it (1) to teach doctrines; or (2) to cultivate spirituality by means of intimate personal dealing, and by influencing individuals—singly? Which is better for the spiritual welfare of the children, to be taught *en masse* by a clergyman; or to be dealt with, a few at a time, by Sunday School teachers? It does not do to assume that every clergyman is a skilled education-alist, and that every Sunday School teacher is a fool. Such an assumption is not justified by the actual facts.

The Bishop of Manchester writes:—

"Looking back upon my own ministry, I feel how ill prepared for teaching I was myself. . . . If that were given which God never gives, the opportunity of recalling the past, and of starting afresh, I could not be content to seek ordination now, without giving at least six months to the study and practice of the method of teaching. We are teachers quite as truly

¹ "Pastors and Teachers", p. 117. Bishop Gore is High Church. Bishop Knox is Low Church.

as any others. We have the same children to handle as teachers in Elementary Schools. We have larger classes often than theirs. But, while training is rigorously exacted of the elementary teacher, and his work extends over many years, it is possible for a man to be ordained Deacon, and even Priest, who has never set foot in a school, has never seen children taught, and has never read so much as one book on the theory or art of teaching."¹

A clergyman who really loves and understands children, and who has a natural genius for teaching, and who possesses a profound knowledge of the science and art of education, and who has, in addition, a wide acquaintance with the psychology of child-development, together with an infinite capacity for taking pains, and a great deal of time for the work, cannot adequately and simultaneously teach a mixed assembly of children of all ages, both sexes, and consisting of those educated in two different kinds of Public Elementary Schools.²

It is an impossibility to give to each child in a catechism that amount of individual attention which is imperatively necessary for his spiritual culture. If one priest can only catechise a small proportion of the children at a time, what is to be done with the

¹ "Pastors and Teachers", pp. 12 and 13.

² Provided, and Unprovided; i.e. Undenominational, and Anglican.

remainder while the "Catechism" is in progress? Are the other pupils to be learning nothing but Halma? Thus several "Catechisms" are necessary; several priests; and several rooms, or churches.

There is a great deal to be said for the "Catechism," with all its excellent educational machinery; but there is more to be said for the Sunday School, even when the latter is of the average type, which it need not continue to be. It is unfair to compare a good "Catechism" with a bad Sunday School.

To quote again from Bishop Knox's book:—

"As a matter of fact, many half-educated persons have proved themselves successful Sunday School teachers, and have gained a really religious influence over children, where the trained teacher has failed to do so.

"Character naturally tells more in religion—than in any other teaching."¹

He goes on to say:—

"The real question is, however, whether training in the art of teaching would not have multiplied manifold the usefulness and power of the half-educated person."

¹ The indomitable and intense love of a Sunday School teacher for her six or eight demonstrative little urchins is a power which is perhaps greater than that exercised by the educational, and theological expert, who deals with large masses of children simultaneously. There is a good deal of human nature in the average child, and the personal element counts for much in spiritual culture.

This latter remark suggests the obvious alternative to impatiently dispensing with the work of the Sunday School, on the ground that the teachers are untaught. *Why not train the teachers?* Why not teach them How and What to teach? In order to conduct a "Catechism" satisfactorily, the best work, and most of the time, of a really gifted and well-trained curate is necessary; given such a man, may he not do very much better work by training, and teaching, and inspiring, and helping, his Sunday School teachers? By this method the children may be almost as well taught; and they will certainly receive infinitely more personal attention, and intimate special dealing than would be possible in a large "Catechism."

The tendency in large towns is for the clergy to deal single-handed with great masses, simultaneously. It becomes a fixed habit with the town clergyman to think in hundreds, or thousands. Jesus Christ's method was, however, to get into soul-contact with one at a time. He had an infinite capacity for taking pains with each case separately. His plan was to deal with single individuals, and when He had taught these (one at a time) He worked indirectly through them. Jesus Christ's idea (and that of His Apostles) was that every disciple should teach, as well as learn. There is truth in the illustration employed by the

man who said (apropos of this subject) that in order to fill a cellarful of narrow-necked bottles, the best way is (not to let fly at them wholesale with a hose-pipe, but) to fill one at a time by means of a funnel. The Sunday School teacher represents the funnel. The better way of setting up the Kingdom of Heaven in the souls of a thousand children, is to get hold of and retain a hold upon, one child at a time, rather than to address a crowd *en masse*. (Much must, however, depend upon the circumstances of the individual parish.) Speaking generally, organization is better than single-handed effort. The former may not be so easy as the latter, but it is certainly more effective. It is usually better to instruct lay workers how to teach, than to dispense with their help on the ground that they stand in need of teaching. No doubt the efforts of many Sunday School teachers do display more zeal than wisdom, but it is worth while to employ the zeal, and, at the same time, to supplement the wisdom. What they do not already know they can be taught.

During the Education Bill (1906) debate a Member of Parliament created great merriment by saying:— "The teaching in the Sunday School has often been regarded as a kind of safety-valve for the exuberant zeal of the younger members of the clergyman's family." To adopt this attitude towards voluntary

teachers may or may not be amusing, but it is certainly unwise to sneer at amateurs. Moreover, to follow up such jests with bitter complaints that the laity leave too much to the clergy is unfair to the former. Of course, they leave too much to the priest, if they have no alternative allowed to them. Perhaps one of the strongest features of Nonconformity is the wise practice of first training, and then utilising, the efforts of every possible member of the congregation. The Nonconformist minister acts upon the principle that the "Harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." The Dissenter says that he does not believe in "one-man shows", but in corporate action. Churchmen, on the contrary, are apt to look upon parsons as "the Church"; and to regard the laity as outsiders, whose duties are limited to subscribing money, and listening to sermons. How often does one hear the expression: "So-and-so is going into the Church"; meaning that he is about to take Holy Orders and become different from other men.¹ It is unwise to ignore the priesthood of the laity, who were confirmed by the "laying on of hands."

In his "Parish Priest of the Town" the late Bishop Gott says that the clergyman has to influence

¹ Humanity has been classified under four heads :—

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. Men | 2. Women |
| 3. Children | 4. Parsons |

many thousands of people. How is it to be done? There are only twenty-four hours in the day, and only 365 days in the year, and the population is largely a shifting one; moreover, influence, in order to be effective, must be personal and continuous. How can one finite man, with manifold duties, hope to adequately influence all those for whose spiritual welfare he is personally responsible? The Bishop (who was a great authority upon the subject) answers this question thus :—

“The highest exertion of genius is the uniting and concentrating effort. Into the teeming multitudes of our large towns—ever coming and going—diffuse yourself that you may concentrate yourself, through an army of Church workers, and unite them with your parishioners and yourself ‘in Christ.’ First gather around you a few kindred souls. Not too many, nor any one, especially at first, for *your own powers are limited, and if the leaven be not adequate for the lump, the dough will not rise.* Your first selected band must be your second leaven, and so on. You will find pillars of the Chapel returning to the Church as the sound of living work rises across the town. Men will tell you that they were Dissenters, not for its doctrine, but only for its fervour of work, and when they find employment in the service of the old Church of England, they join it, with heart and

hand. As for the teaching, its motion is circular. Starting with the Vicar or Curate, in the Teachers' meeting, it passes into the children in the School."

And he might have added, thence into the parents, and from them it spreads throughout the parish. The process has been likened to the action of leaven. And He who gave us the parable, Himself acted upon the principle embodied in it.

Bishop Knox¹ writes :—

"The Prayer Book commands us to catechise. But the Prayer Book was compiled three centuries and a half ago,² when Sunday Schools were unknown, and educational methods were very different. Are we to obey this command, or to plead that it has become obsolete, and must be obeyed only in the spirit? It is often assumed that catechising is inconsistent with the maintenance of Sunday Schools. The children cannot be in two places at once. If they are taken to church every Sunday, the Sunday School teacher becomes a pedagogue in the literal sense of the word, a mere monitor, or usher, in charge of the children. This is work not likely to attract the best teachers, and I have known clergy who, in their zeal to catechise, have disbanded their Sunday School staff. Yet a very good case can be made out

¹ "Pastors and Teachers", pp. 98 and 99.

² When the parochial system was adequate, and the population much smaller.

for the Sunday School. It calls out, as no other institution has, the highest spiritual gifts of the laity. It has realized to some extent the ideal of which the sponsorial system is the reflection—the ideal that the whole Church is responsible for all her children. Again, to use a favourite phrase of a former colleague of mine, so skilful in attracting children and teachers that he went by the name of ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’, ‘it catches the children in their runs.’ Where they are used to go on week-days they will readily go on Sundays. Is it worth while to break up so valuable an organization for the sake of returning to a medieval archaism? If the question is put in this form there can be only one answer to it. It cannot be right to destroy the Sunday School.”

On the other hand, it is undoubtedly advisable for the clergyman to catechise some of the children each Sunday, e.g. first Sunday, infants; second Sunday, small girls; third Sunday, small boys; fourth Sunday, elder girls; and so on.¹

No public-school master would endeavour to teach chemistry, arithmetic, Latin, French or any secular subject to the first class, and to the sixth class, simultaneously.

No clergyman can catechise children of all ages,

¹ The member of the clerical staff who is in charge of the Sunday School should conduct the catechising, because the teaching on Sunday should be all of a piece.

and both sexes, at the same time, without complete failure, because the pupils' interests and capacities are too diverse to be dealt with simultaneously. Consequently, in order to catechise all the children on the same day, several catechisms would be necessary, and they could not all be conducted at once by the same priest.

As an alternative to catechising alternate sections, as suggested above, the clerical catechist may with advantage form a "Catechism" for certain of the elder scholars. With regard to the best way of conducting such a "Catechism" I do not propose to deal, because there are already so many excellent books upon the subject. Amongst others may be mentioned the following :—

"The Ministry of Catechising," by Bishop Dupanloup (translated) (Griffith Farran).

"The Method of S. Sulpice" (translated) (Griffith Farran).

"The Catechist's Handbook," by Rev. J. N. Newland-Smith.

"The Clergy and the Catechism," by Rev. Spencer Jones (Skeffington).

CO-ORDINATION

A PART altogether from the respective merits, or demerits, of the several independent educational agencies, taken singly, there is the question of their co-ordination to be considered. How far do they work harmoniously together for the spiritual culture of the children? Let us, for a change, look at the subject from the pupils' point of view. It is, after all, an important point of view, because the only true measure of any teaching is the extent of the learning, and the learning depends upon the pupil. It is a truism that in all teaching, the learner's point of view is the most important one. It cannot be too often pointed out that teaching is a dual process, in which the pupil's active participation is the measure of the teacher's achievements. In order to estimate the net result of the several religious agencies which are at work upon the children, let us take a fair average example—a practical concrete case. We will try to understand the pupil's point of view.

Here is Tom Smith who attends Church Day, and Sunday Schools, and whose parents are devout Christians. Let us first review the religious education which he receives during one week. Then by multiplying that by 52 one has the spiritual culture of a year; and by multiplying the latter by 6 or 8 one arrives at the sum total of the boy's religious education; from which, however, a large deduction must, of course, be made for what he inevitably forgets.

One may mention in passing that there is no satisfactory scientific (progressive) syllabus. There is no concordant relation between this year's instruction and that which preceded it, or that which will succeed it.

The items of Tom Smith's religious instruction for one week consist of the following subjects:—

DAY SCHOOL

- Monday:* 1 Sam., chap. X., first half.
Tuesday: Catechism; the words of the "Desire."
Wednesday: Prayer Book; the "Christian Seasons."
Thursday: S. Mark, chap. VIII., verses 1-14.
Friday: The Acts, chap. III., second half.
Saturday: Holiday.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday Morning: Catechism ; "The Duty towards one's neighbour."

Sunday Afternoon: S. Luke, chap. VIII., 4-16 (the Parable of the Sower).

CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Morning: ¹ The Tower of Babel story, i.e. the origin of languages.

Afternoon: The Sacrament of Holy Communion.

However excellent each of these subjects may be, and doubtless is, in itself, they bear no concordant relation to one another in the child's mind. There is no co-ordination between these various subjects as taught to the boy. There is little if any system of progress from one definite point to another, no scientific progressive syllabus. Moreover, the various subjects are taught by different teachers, who have their own individual ideals, and aims, and religious views.

The several teachers have, let us say, e.g., the following ideas (if any) as to the one essential thing to aim at in the religious education of Tom Smith.

¹ It always seems to me to be a mistake to have a Children's Service in the Schools immediately before or after morning Sunday School, yet it is a very common practice.

The one thing needful according to :—

Day School teacher No. 1, is the intellectual knowledge of certain isolated sections of Bible history and geography.

Day School teacher No. 2, is the verbal knowledge of Prayer Book Formulæ.

Sunday School teacher No. 1 (*Morning*), is the development of a sense of duty.

Sunday School teacher No. 2 (*Afternoon*), is sudden conversion.

The essential thing according to the superintendent (who takes the morning service in school), is Ancient Manners and Customs of the Jews.¹

The essential thing according to the clergyman, is Sacraments.

The essential thing according to the mother, is love of God.

The essential thing according to the father, is obedience to Commandments.

If by any chance Tom Smith endeavours to harmonise the various ideals which have been presented to him, he fails completely, and inevitably.

After a year or so, the boy moves up into a higher standard in the Day School, and into a higher class

¹ "How many notes a Sackbut hath,
And whether Shawms have strings."

in the Sunday School. The result is, not that the subjects taught are the natural consequents of what he already "knows", but that he is taught a different lot of subjects by a new set of teachers, who have another set of ideals. Roughly they may be perhaps, as follows :—

The One Essential

Day School Teacher No. 1 : Verbal knowledge of the Catechism.

Day School Teacher No. 2 : Knowledge of two isolated sections of Bible history.

The One Essential

Sunday School Teacher (*Morning*) : Contempt for, and hostility to, Dissenters, or Roman Catholics.

Sunday School Teacher (*Afternoon*) : Enthusiasm for Foreign Missions.

The New Curate : Introspection and Repentance.

Sometimes the members of the clerical staff take it in turns to catechise the children. The result is always variety, and sometimes confusion, if not contradiction.

From the child's point of view the sum total of all this "religious education" is a very vague and chaotic knowledge of many isolated facts and theories. Consequently one receives such answers as these :—

(Bible History): "Who was Saul?"

"Saul was king of Israel, and lived at Tarsus. He persecuted the Christians, but was killed upon Mount Gilboa by the Philistines."

Another asset of the child's Sunday education may be thus expressed in the pupil's own pathetic words:—

Catechism: "My dooty to my neighbour is to love him and myself, and to do to all them as I would they should do and to me. To love on her and suck her my father and mother, and bay the Queen and all that are put in a 40 under her. To smit myself to all my teachers spartial pastures and masters, who oughten myself lordly and every to all my betters. To hurt no body by would nor deed, to be few and jest in all my dealings, to beard no males nor hatred in your hearts. . . ."

When a child has to learn words which convey no meaning to him, he is guided by sound only. The capacity to distinguish sounds, and to imitate them, is developed in the child many years before he can understand such phraseology as that employed in the Anglican—Free Church—Lutheran—Roman Catholic—or any other Catechism. The same applies to very many of the Bible-verses which he is called upon to repeat. Therefore the child's efforts result in such fiascos as the following:—

Scripture Text: "Let him chew evil, and too good; let him seek pieces of suet."¹

¹ 1 Pet. III. 11.

But to return to the subject of co-ordination, system, method, and progress, etc.

Is it necessary that the child should be "taught" in a haphazard manner? Need there be so much overlapping, muddle, contradiction, and lack of system in his instruction? We do not teach music, geography, painting or, in fact, any secular subject in the chaotic way in which we "teach" religion. If, by some mismanagement, half a dozen different teachers were set to work to teach geography to Tom Smith, they would not act quite independently of each other, but would, on the contrary, make careful arrangements to work harmoniously together. Or if the task of teaching history to Tom Smith—secular history I mean—were divided amongst six different teachers, they would not each begin at a different period, and each of them use as a text book the writings of a different historian. On the contrary, they would divide the same subject between them. When, however, it is Bible history which has to be taught, no effort is made by the various teachers to work together. They each set to work on their own account.

One teacher takes 1 Samuel.

Another takes The Acts of the Apostles.

A third takes St. Matthew.

A fourth teaches St. Luke.

And no one co-ordinates the instruction given.¹

¹ See Professor Peake's criticisms of the Committee which issues the Unsectarian "International Lesson" Series in "Reform in Sunday School Teaching".

None of them makes any attempt to harmonise the instruction which he gives, with that imparted by the other five teachers. In fact some adopt, more or less, the views of the Higher Critics; and others teach "verbal inspiration". They combine, however, to some extent in blaming the poor, unfortunate boy, for having no coherent knowledge of what he is supposed to have been taught. What wonder is it that when the child has undergone six years of such "religious education" he comes to the conclusion that it is natural and inevitable that Christendom should be divided up into 300 sects; and that, obviously, no two members of any sect can be expected to hold the same views. What wonder if the pupil asks with Pilate: "What is Truth?" and, like the Roman Governor, takes it for granted that it is useless to pause for a satisfactory reply. The teacher ought to thoroughly digest his portion of the subject before trying to teach it. He must also have a clear idea as to what place it holds in relation to the total scheme, otherwise the child cannot avoid being muddled. It appears to me to be self-evident that those who draw up the Day School Syllabus, and those who decide what subjects are to be taken in Sunday School (or in the Catechism) might with advantage work together so as to avoid overlapping. Or, as an alternative, the Sunday instruction might be built up upon the

teaching (if any) given during the week. There ought to be no difficulty about getting a copy of the Day School Syllabus, and taking the historical foundation given during the week, as the basis of the spiritual instruction which may be built upon it on Sunday. Then, again, why should not the teachers meet together and discuss their joint work? Certainly the Sunday School teachers should assemble every week for this purpose.

When I first took charge of a certain large Sunday School, and started weekly meetings of the teachers, I discovered that those who taught the boys were Low Church, and made rather a point of "Evening Communion"; whereas those who instructed the girls made a good deal of the doctrine of "Seven Sacraments". I drew the attention of both parties to the inadvisability of teaching the boys a point of view which differed from that learned by the girls. Brothers and sisters ought, as far as possible, to be given similar teaching, because if they compare notes at home, any divergence in the teaching produces perplexity. The teachers quite saw the reasonableness of my suggestion, although its novelty somewhat surprised them. Of course, each school saw the absurdity—not of its own but—of the *other's* action. The reason why the Boys' School was Low Church, and the Girls' School High Church, was that the Superintendent of each

found, and influenced his own teachers. If the Superintendents had had less definite views, there would have been more variety in the teaching of each section of the school, and less difference between the two departments. There was one merit in the strange arrangement, viz. that neither the boys nor the girls were called upon to change their views each time that they were promoted to a higher class. They were at least saved from that common source of confusion and muddle.

The chief difficulty that one experienced in dealing with the problem, was that each of the two Superintendents had, of course, acted wisely in avoiding doctrinal chaos by finding teachers of the same type, and point of view. Moreover, the two Superintendents were not to blame for entertaining divergent views from one another. The Vicar (who invited them to superintend) was the culprit. Not that the Superintendents blamed him. On the contrary, each confidently claimed the Vicar as belonging to his own party. Each, therefore, maintained that it was the other Superintendent who was the source of all the trouble, and should therefore resign.

These little difficulties are common enough in Sunday Schools, but they frequently remain undiscovered. In order to discover, one must investigate. In order to find out whether all the children are

receiving the same kind of teaching, or not, one must know what each teacher is aiming at.

It is also necessary to have a very clear idea in one's own mind as to what one would like them all to aspire to. If the clergyman is vague and indefinite in his own mind, his teachers cannot know what he wishes them to teach. If the teachers are vague as to what they intend to teach, the children will have exceedingly hazy notions as to what they are expected to learn.

Of course, amongst Nonconformists there is even greater divergence of opinion than among Anglicans. Perhaps no two members of any sect (there are over 300 sects) are agreed as to the answer to Pilate's question: "What is Truth?"

Bishop Gott remarks:—

"A young student once asked the greatest of English painters how he might succeed in his art. *Know what you have to do*, and do it, was the answer. Following this advice, that student rose to no common greatness; and then he wrote: 'It is the great principle of success in every direction of human effort. For I believe that failure is less frequently attributable to either insufficiency of means, or impatience of labour, than a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done.' (Ruskin, 'Seven Lamps', i.)"¹

¹ "The Parish Priest of the Town", p. 38.

Bishop Creighton said, apropos of education :—

“ It is in seeing what has to be done, rather than in the capacity shown in doing it, that the real power of a great man consists ”.¹

I wonder what is the proportion of those engaged in “ The Religious Education of Children ”, who have made up their minds what it is exactly that “ has to be done ”? Before one sets to work to do anything, one ought surely to have a clear conception of what to aim at.

¹ “ Thoughts on Education ”, p. 42.

WHAT IS THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN?

BEFORE we can hope to reform religious education we must understand its nature, and before we can do so we must be able to give the right reply to various preliminary queries. For instance, it is imperative that one should have a definite and clear answer to the following :—

1. What is Religion : (i.e. that which has to be "taught" ?)
2. What is Education : (e.g. does it consists of teaching, training, inspiring, or developing— or of *all four combined* ?)
3. What is a Child : (i.e. the nature of the material upon which one has to work ?)

It is clearly impossible to successfully conduct the religious education of a child unless one is in a position to answer the three above-mentioned queries. One must know (1) What to teach ; (2) How to teach ; and (3) those whom one has to teach. It is imperative that one should also realize

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that teaching is but one of the factors included under the comprehensive expression Culture—or Education.

Moreover, in order to successfully conduct the spiritual culture of children one must also be able to give a satisfactory answer to the following additional questions:—

4. How much time is there at one's disposal?
(How many hours a week, and how many years of school life, have we in which to achieve the desired result?)
5. How much can one teach in the time? What can be dispensed with?¹ What is absolutely necessary?
6. In what way can one economise, and make the most of, the very brief time at one's disposal? How much overlapping, muddling, confusion, etc., can one eliminate?

We have a great deal to do for the child, and very little time in which to do it; especially if religion is almost, if not quite, excluded from the Day School curriculum.

Could a man be sure
That his days would endure
As of old, for a thousand long years,
What things might he know!
What deeds might he do!
And all without hurry or care.

¹ One need not teach those theological ideas which have obviously become obsolete. I have endeavoured to point out several of these in my book "Old Beliefs and New Knowledge" (Longmans, Green).

But we who have but span-long lives, in order to make the most of our time, must be quite clear in our own minds as to what it is exactly that we have to aim at.

In the first place, then—(1) What is religion? What is it that one has to impart? What do we want the pupil to acquire, or to learn? Unless the teacher has definite and clear ideas as to what to teach, the pupil cannot possibly have any lucid notion as to what he is expected to learn. What, then, is the subject to be taught?

- (a) Does religion consist of the intellectual knowledge of Jewish history; a mental grasp of the geography of Palestine; the capacity to repeat Bible sentences; or memorising of the Catechism; or all four combined? In short, is religion a particular kind of intellectual knowledge? Is it a feat of memory?
- (b) Or is religion personal relationship with God? Does it consist of spiritual affinity for, and communion with Our Father?
- (c) Or is the essence of religion a particular kind of moral character which displays itself in conduct? Can an Agnostic be religious?
- (d) Or is religion a certain kind of emotion? Is it made up of feelings? Does it consist of sentiments?

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- (e) Or is faith (in the sense of spiritual vision) the essential thing to impart by means of religious education?

Is religion Intellectual; Spiritual; Emotional; or does it consist rather of Moral Conduct?

It is not my purpose just at present, to define religion: or to say what is the essential thing. My point just now is that in order to teach a thing, one must know definitely and clearly what that thing is. No one can teach religion, or anything else, until he knows what it is. Or (if I may employ the metaphor) in order to hit the bull's-eye one must first see the target. That is to say, that if one would adjust means to ends, one must know what the latter are. What, then, is the essence of religion?

(2) Then, again, what is education? Does it consist in pigeon-holing the mind with words? Is the end and aim of education (1) to stock the memory of the pupil with phrases?¹ Or does it consist (2) in imparting ideas? Is it a process of filling up the child with information, as one fills a tank? Is instruction the essential thing in education? Or, on the other hand, does education consist rather in (3) the development of habits, and faculties?

¹ Bishop Creighton wrote:—"True education consists in developing the intellect, not in committing to memory before an examination pages of information often profoundly dry and generally inaccurate."

(3) And yet once more, What is a Child? Is he a little man, or a small woman; or is he, on the contrary, *sui generis*? As a matter of fact, the child's mind and spirit differ as much from those of an adult as e.g. does a caterpillar's character from that of a butterfly. Or to change the metaphor, the child resembles the adult to the same extent that the tadpole resembles the frog. Their outlook upon life is different. Then, again, the boy of six bears but slight resemblance to the boy of thirteen (and still less to the girl of that age). The interests and capacities of the one are very different from those of the other. To treat the one as though he were the other is to be guilty of gross and fatal mismanagement.

The measure of any teaching is the extent of the learning. Only that which the child has learned can be said to have been taught. To teach is, then, to cause another to know. But there are two kinds of knowledge; two ways of knowing anything. Bearing this fact in mind the following will be recognized as a better definition of teaching:—To teach is to take one living idea at a time from one's own mind, and plant it *so that it will grow* in the mind of another. In order to do this one must know the soil—so to speak—into which one is to implant the idea. What, then, are the spiritual, moral, intellectual,

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and emotional capacities of the child? Obviously a child's capacity will limit the extent of the learning.

In what sequence do the child's faculties awaken and respond to stimulus and education? What is the normal evolution of the affections, God-consciousness, self-consciousness, the moral sense, logical faculty, memory, etc., in the child? He must not be regarded as so much putty which can be moulded into any shape, at any time. If he ceases to be himself, if he is robbed of his own individuality, he has lost his most valuable possession. It is bad art on the part of any teacher to treat any child as if he were a kind of gramophone, whose business it is to take in mechanically, and to repeat automatically, whatever is spoken into it.

Nor should the child be treated as if he were a kind of lifeless mirror, whose business it is to accurately reflect the alien characteristics of his teacher. The child's most valuable possession is his own living personality. He must feel that his soul is his own. His individuality and faculties should be developed and trained. Nothing can compensate a child for ceasing to be himself. He should be taught to see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, think with his own brain, and exercise his own judgment aright. It is what he is, rather than what he can repeat, that is of importance both to him and to the community.

As I have said, the child is not the same at one period of his development as he is at another. At first the child's physical senses are most keenly alive to impressions, and it is comparatively useless during that period to attempt to rely upon his logical faculties. He can experience, before he can diagnose his experiences. He can e.g. love God before he can analyse his own affections. He can be religious before he can analyse his "Christian Experience." He is "conscious" before he is "self-conscious."

Then, at a later period, the memory becomes very good, and should be largely appealed to.

The imaginative stage which follows is somewhat impervious to rules, and regulation, and formulæ.

Afterwards, reason rules supreme ; and so on.¹

His capacity, relatively, for devotion, and theological acumen, varies with his development. If one

¹ Dr. W. B. Drummond, in his book, "The Child: his Nature and Nurture," tells us on page 21 that :—

"Every individual child passes through certain definite stages of development, which are indeed not sharply separated from one another, but which may be represented somewhat as follows :—

- (a) A stage of *sensation*, in which the various sense organs are acted on by the outside world, and responsive movements are noticed more or less definitely indicative of pleasure or pain.
- (b) A stage of *perception* with differentiation of the sense functions, and adaptive movements.
- (c) A stage of representation, in which appear memory, imagination, attention, and more complex motor co-ordinations.
- (d) A stage of *reflection*, reasoning, unselfish emotion, and voluntary movement.

would know what part of the subject (i.e. of religion) to teach a child, at any particular period, one must know his present capacity ; and it is necessary to understand the laws of his growth.

In shooting coal it is important to know the capacity of the cellar. In filling a tank the amount of water introduced is limited solely by the capacity of the cistern. In introducing knowledge, etc., into the soul of a child *another* consideration is of importance. (The reader's capacity for learning the Chinese language may be very great, but if he has no intention of learning it, his capacity in that direction will be wasted.) In the same way the child's interest in a subject is a most important factor, because it is the measure of his attention. The essence of the art of education is the capacity to interest ; and the art of interesting necessitates looking at the subject from the pupil's point of view ; and the pupil's outlook varies with his age. Let me repeat—he has a varying capacity for different kinds of knowledge, at the various stages of his development, and the extent of his capacity may be measured by his interest, and attention. Education has been called the science of interesting, and, in order to interest, one must know what interests the child. Unless he is interested, he will not attend ; and if he does not attend he cannot learn ; and unless he learns we cannot be said to

teach him. Teaching is a dual process in which the pupil's share, namely learning, depends upon the amount of interest he takes in the subject artistically introduced to his notice. His interest depends very much upon the relationship between his age and character, and the subject of the lesson. As long ago as 1878 Herbert Spencer wrote :—

“ We are on the highway towards the doctrine long ago enunciated by Pestalozzi, that alike in its order and its methods, education must conform to the natural process of mental evolution—that there is a certain sequence in which the faculties spontaneously develop, and a certain kind of knowledge which each requires during its development ; and that it is for us to ascertain this sequence, and supply this knowledge.”¹

One can only teach that which the child can learn. To attempt to teach him what he cannot learn, is not only to fail to teach him anything, but also to give him a *permanent distaste* for what he would otherwise have been interested in later on. Teachers whose zeal outstrips their discretion sometimes bore children so persistently by habitually making the above-mentioned mistake, that they teach their pupils to permanently dislike religion.

¹ “ Education”, p. 46.

THE EDUCATION CONTROVERSY

No thesis is true if wholly divorced from its antithesis.

A PART altogether from the great and obvious financial difficulties¹ of the question ; and apart from the sectarian bitterness which has, unfortunately, been lavished upon the problem of religious education, the real difficulty consists in the prevalence of two sharply antagonistic ideals,² as to the end and aim of spiritual culture. These ideals are unfortunately in violent conflict throughout the country, owing partly to mutual misunderstanding and exaggerated language.

¹ The principle of "no taxation without representation" is a good one. But when we have said this we have committed ourselves to the principle that the taxpayer should have some voice in the spending of his money. The (so-called) Education Bill of 1906 somewhat overlooks the fact that other people pay rates and taxes besides the Non-conformists. As Mr. Augustine Birrell so candidly expressed it, (political) "minorities must suffer" (religious disadvantages).

² We are learning (very slowly) to respect one another's religious ideals, even when we do not find it possible to appreciate one another's methods of advertising them, and forcing them upon those to whom they are abhorrent. We may all of us learn something from those ideals which are the antitheses of our own.

The Anglican point of view is briefly as follows :—

- (1) God is not unknowable ; something definite is known with regard to Him.
- (2) This knowledge about God is important ; and therefore it is worth teaching to our children. They should benefit by the spiritual wisdom of the ages that are past, rather than attempt to re-discover everything *de novo* for themselves.
- (3) In order to teach children, one must be definite, rather than vague ; one must avoid abstractions, and teach in the concrete. One must teach conclusions, rather than the pros and cons which may be advanced on either side, because the critical faculty lies dormant in childhood.
- (4) Teachers who have learned both how to teach, and also what to teach—and who have moreover five days a week in which to impart information, should not be prevented, *against their wills*, from teaching theology during school hours, to those children of the State who are ready to receive it, and who are compelled to attend school.
- (5) Although knowledge about God is a preliminary necessity, it is only a part of the larger process of knowing God—personally. Theological knowledge is not the same thing as

God-consciousness, but, in order to establish conscious personal relationship with God, children must be taught a little about Him.

In a word, the Church believes in teaching religious facts, and ideals to children. She considers that the child should *first learn the facts, and not until afterwards be called upon to display emotion with regard to them.* We maintain that knowledge of God must precede religious emotion.

The Nonconformist has a fundamentally different conception of the nature of religious education. His ideal is, roughly, the antithesis of the one above mentioned.¹ He does not agree with the Anglican with regard to the answer to any one of the three following questions:—

1. What is religion?
2. What is education?
3. What is a child?

We may, however, reduce the divergence of opinion to its simplest terms, and say that the great crux consists in the difference between the views of the Church, and those of Nonconformity, on the subject of "salvation" in relation to the child. Both the Churchman and the Nonconformist aim at the salvation of the young, but they do not agree as to the correct method of achieving the desired result.

¹ I am accepting Dr. Horton's definition of the "Free Church" position.

The Church (baptises the infant, and then) assumes that he is in a state of salvation (unless he falls away from God by giving way to gross sin). Being in a state of salvation, we believe that the infant's religious culture should include instruction, training, developing, etc. (rather than consist of a series of emotional revival meetings). In a word, the Anglican teaches the child that he is in union with God, and that the said union is of the essence of religion.

The Dissenter,¹ on the contrary, maintains that children are born in sin, and the children of wrath, and that they remain so until they are converted. The Nonconformist teaches children that they are alienated from God until they are vividly conscious of certain "Religious Experience". Salvation, they say, is dependent upon a certain kind of self-consciousness on the part of the child. This self-consciousness, not being natural to small children, must be artificially

¹ I am at a loss for a suitable term to employ when referring to those who "cast out devils in Christ's name" but who "do not follow us". The word dissenter is not satisfactory because it draws attention to one's differences. Besides, I myself should "dissent from" any doctrine of my Church if it struck me as being mistaken. The same objection applies to the term Nonconformist. The expression Free Churchman is not more satisfactory. The Anglican clergyman is the freest of all ministers. Vicars can be coerced by no one—they are free from the dictation of Subscribers, Elders, Deacons, Bishops, etc. Except when they live on pew-rents they are absolutely free to speak boldly. Of course all ministers are bound, morally, by their trust-deeds; and all are bound in love to respect the opinions of their congregation as far as conscience allows. Politically we are free also.

induced as soon as possible. Religious Education cannot be begun before sudden conversion. The process of inducing the desired crisis is—they tell us—the essential thing in religious education.

This divergence of opinion on this subject, has given rise to the Religious Difficulty, as it exists to-day in the educational problem now before Parliament. The Day School teacher may not (so the Dissenters say) be “saved”, and consequently he cannot impart what he does not possess. The man that is alienated from God cannot bring about the child’s union with the Father. The teachers, we are told, are Government officials, and, as servants of the State, it would be the height of folly to expect them all to be saints; and it would be still more absurd to expect them to be saints of the Dissenting type. It would, moreover, be religious tyranny to investigate the nature of the spiritual life of each teacher. For these reasons Nonconformity is for the most part averse to having any religion whatever taught in Day Schools; but “in order to meet Churchmen half way”, and for the sake of peace, the majority of Nonconformists have agreed not to object to Bible-reading in school.¹ A strong minority, however, are against Bible-reading in school.

¹ I am giving Nonconformists credit for motives as disinterested as those of Churchmen, therefore I need not touch upon the vexed question of the ownership of the schools which the Church of England has

As I have said, the Church of England regards the baptised infant as already the child of God, and as already an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Being in a "state of salvation," what he needs is *instruction* as to how to live worthy of his son-ship and salvation. We see no reason why professional teachers, who are willing to do so, should be debarred from imparting the desired instruction, at the cost of those who desire it to be given: always supposing that they are qualified to give it.

The Dissenter, on the other hand, thinks that what the child needs is revival meetings, large and small, public and private. These (he maintains) are wholly out of place in the Day School.

The ideal of the Anglican is to give instruction first, in the Day School, and exhortation afterwards (in Sunday School, etc.), the instruction, and exhortation, respectively, being given by those who are qualified to give it. At the same time those of us who, like myself, have spent many hours a week for many years in Public Elementary Schools have met no greater saints than many Day School teachers are, and we have known no inspiring influence to equal theirs.

I am anxious to accurately describe the Noncon-built. I am dealing rather with the divergence of opinion as to whether religion should, or should not, be taught in the schools which the Anglican has built.

formists' point of view. Perhaps I ought to quote their own words on the subject, because, not being a Dissenter myself, I am very apt to mistake their ideals, during the present embittered controversy. After all, ministers, on both sides, are merely human, and prejudice is almost inseparable from enthusiasm, constituted as we are.

In the "Sabbath School Teachers' Handbook", issued by the Sunday School Union, which is used by all the sects, we have on page 11 the following instruction for teachers:—

"In a word, CONVERSION is the be-all (*sic*) and the end-all (*sic*) of Sabbath School instruction. No doubt when *conversion* has been reached, *edification*, or building up, will follow, but the building cannot proceed until the sure and stable foundation is laid. We have first, then, to see to the foundation."

Let me now quote one of the latest things which has been written on the subject by a man who is, I believe, regarded by Dissenters as the greatest Nonconformist minister; and who was President of the "Free Church Council".¹ Every one will admit that he is in a position to describe accurately the Nonconformist point of view. (He is referring to the Religious Difficulty in Public Elementary Schools.)

¹ Dr. Horton in "The Child and Religion", published in 1905.

Dr. Horton writes (apropos of the problem which awaits solution by Parliament):—

“There are two points which may be regarded in some sense as distinctive of the Free Church view of religious education. The first of these is the conviction that every child must be born again of the Spirit.” (He means by this “Sudden Conversion”).

[The Anglican also believes that Jesus Christ was right when He said: “Except one (τις) be born of water and the Spirit one cannot enter into the Kingdom of God”. But we do not believe that Christ is here laying down the dogma that the only method of entering the kingdom is by being suddenly converted in infancy. Dr. Horton goes on to say with regard to this spiritual crisis which he says must be procured :—]

“First, then, we may look at the theory that conversion is the necessary beginning of a Christian life, for in the light of that conviction *the object of all religious training is to lead the soul to that decisive crisis ; and apart from that decisive crisis all religious teaching will be ineffective.*”

At this point he digresses in order to condemn the Church of England, whose teaching on the subject of Baptism he, unfortunately, misunderstands. Dr. Horton then continues with a dogmatism born of

intense conviction, and therefore deserving of respect :—

“Conversion is a process which implies consciousness ; it is not accomplished in our dreams, nor can it be accomplished for us.¹ It is the change which takes place when the mind responds to truth and the soul responds to God. To treat any one as converted when he is not, is to induce a blindness and lethargy of the spirit, which are the most serious obstacles to conversion. The *first* element, therefore, of religious education, is to recognize that the soul has to be awakened, and the personal response to the Christian verities has to be secured.”

This, then, is according to the (then) President of the Free Church Council, the Nonconformist ideal of religious education. It is admirably, and most persuasively expressed ; I know no more eloquent plea for revivals for children. It is however an ideal which differs from the Anglican in that the former

¹ The Church of England maintains that the little child's consciousness of God's activity in his soul is no measure of divine activity. Religion, i.e. relationship with God, is to some extent subconscious especially before the infant becomes self-conscious. Dr. Horton says that “conversion cannot be accomplished for us”: the religious consciousness of the Anglican compels him to believe that all that is good in man has its source in God. Consequently during the Penitential Season of Lent we Churchmen pray : “Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves ; keep us—etc.” And again : “O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do—etc.”.

begins by endeavouring to produce a crisis ; whereas the latter begins by educating ; and leaves the crisis to be dealt with at a later period, viz. at Confirmation. My own opinion is likely to be as biassed in the one direction, as Dr. Horton's is in the opposite direction, because we are Ministers who unfortunately find ourselves on opposite sides during a period of embittered controversy. Let me therefore now quote the remarks of one who is a skilled educationalist and far removed from the storm-centre of debate—the President of Clark University, U.S.A.

The subject of “religious education” may be approached from five points of view : (1) from that of religion ; (2) from the standpoint of sectarian bitterness ; (3) from that of education ; (4) from the aspect of Party Politics ; and (5) from the point of view of the poor little child.

Apropos of inducing a crisis in the souls of infants—which Dr. Horton tells us is the goal of the Non-conformist teacher—the President of Clark University says, speaking from the educational point of view, upon which he is an authority :—

“ I think that in some of our communions we have been premature ; we have sought for too speedy results. A great many have sought to reap where they have not sown. They have endeavoured to pick open the bud before it was ready to blossom of itself.

We have revival sermons still, to children; and one of these revivalists was kind enough to send me a list of his conversions, and I figured up over four thousand of them, and found that the average age of the children he had converted was *nine years!* We know what the results of precocity are. If children's minds are brought in contact with great things that they cannot grapple, there is a kind of inoculation that takes place. They are vaccinated. They have the chicken-pox form, instead of the severe form, and they are prevented from taking a deeper and more permanent transforming interest in these things."¹

As I have elsewhere remarked in quite another connection:² It has been said that man's *physical frame* (in its prenatal stages) "climbs up the genealogical tree of the race." In other words, the human embryo starts from a single cell (and its union with another) and evolves step by step, higher and higher, until at birth it has taken a human form.

The same is true of the evolution of the infant's *conscience*; it evolves slowly step by step, each stage resembling one which the race passed through when in its infancy.

The same thing happens with the infant's *Spiritual Faculties*. They evolve slowly, the lower giving place

¹ "Principles of Religious Education."

² Article on the evolution of God-consciousness in the Jewish nation, in "Old Beliefs and New Knowledge."

to the higher by a process of metamorphosis. Sometimes teachers force the pace. They worry and hustle the child in their efforts to procure its salvation. They keep on telling it that it is not "saved", because it has not that feeling of smug satisfaction, which is unnatural to children and to saints. Some parents take *violent* measures to force the pace. They are like children who have not the patience to wait for their tadpoles to lose their tails, and develop hind legs, but impatiently pull off the tail to hurry matters. The child, by nipping off the tadpole's tail, destroys what would, if left alone, have evolved into hind legs. In other words, the operation (although well meant) is pernicious, because it prevents the frog from ever developing its most useful limbs. And in the same way, the parent or teacher who suppresses what is childlike and *natural* in the religious evolution of the infant, prevents its spiritual development from taking the usual and natural course, and developing by slow degrees into something higher. It is for this reason, amongst others, that so many of the sons of clergymen, of Nonconformist ministers, and of intensely religious people generally, grow up with defective spiritual capacities. They have had the natural evolution of their organ of God-consciousness unnecessarily *tampered with*. Parents have childishly, and foolishly, pulled up the "tender

plant", in order to frequently inspect the "roots". They have ignored the wise advice of the Master, who said, "Consider the lilies, how they *grow*";¹ and again, "The Kingdom of Heaven cometh not by observation",² and yet again, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed".³ The seed ought to "grow secretly"⁴ and naturally; to force it is to weaken it. For these reasons God's inspiration of the Jews was gradual and progressive, and Jesus Christ appeared late in their history.

Fröebel was right when he said, "Every child must live out completely every complete stage of childhood, or he can never develop into complete maturity."

Let me avoid expressing myself as strongly as I feel by again quoting one who is not an Englishman nor a minister. The President of Clark University (U.S.A.) says:—

"I am entirely convinced that if we wish to work with Nature, and not against her, it is necessary that the chief personal application of the experience, and the saving work of Christ, be applied not much earlier than the decade in which the Episcopal Church confirms, than the time when the Roman Catholic,

¹ S. Mark vi. 28. Not how "beautiful they are", but "how they grow".

² S. Luke xvii. 20.

³ S. Matthew xiii. 31; S. Mark iv. 31; S. Luke xiii. 19.

⁴ S. Mark iv. 27.

and the Lutheran Churches confirm, than the time when the very careful statistics in the Presbyterian and the Methodist and the Baptist and the Congregational Churches show that most conversions take place, with children twelve or thirteen or thereabouts, until the beginning of the transformation. Nature indicates there the necessity of new and larger views, the necessity of regenerative processes, because then the child's whole nature is turned about."¹

Dr. Starbuck (who is an American layman and apparently does not belong to my communion) has published a volume containing elaborate statistics on the subject of "conversion".² On page 29 he gives a diagram representing the high-tide mark of conversion, which he places at the age of sixteen for both boys and girls. The following conclusion is printed in italics:—

"Conversion is a distinctively adolescent phenomenon."

According to this authority, girls often experience a religious crisis at the age of thirteen, but more frequently at the age of sixteen, and seldom during the intermediate period. The crisis in the religious life of boys takes place most frequently at sixteen. Nonconformists apparently endeavour to artificially produce this crisis in their infants. The Church

¹ "Principles of Education", p. 177.

² "The Psychology of Religion" (Contemporary Science Series).

waits ; bides her time ; does not force the pace ; does not pluck open the bud ; does not anticipate the laws of child development. Both Churchmen and Dissenters are convinced that they act wisely in adopting the method peculiar to each. Neither is justified in quarrelling with the other's most cherished conviction, but each is at liberty to explain why he believes as he does. I need not, then, apologize for supporting our contention.

We all of us have known children (infant prodigies, etc.) who were never allowed to be children. The childlike in them was eliminated. Experience teaches us that these aged infants will never be manly, because they have never been allowed to be child-like. The crisis which Dr. Horton's school of thought presses upon the children in the infants' department, the Church recognizes, and deals with most carefully when young people arrive at a suitable period for confirmation ; that is to say, when they begin the larger life.

I venture to think that I shall be acting wisely if I quote an American educationalist who is not a minister of religion, and who is not an English politician.

Dr. De Garmo, Professor of the Science and Art of Education in Cornell University, U.S.A., speaking as an educationalist, says :—

"In the earlier years of religious instruction it ought to be assumed that every child is a child of God ; that by virtue of this fact he belongs in the Christian family, and that it would be a disaster, if for any reason, he should be considered as excluded from it. Children ought not to be allowed to drift on and on with the general assumption that they are lost, and the vague hope that sometime they will be redeemed ; but direct conscious effort should be made to initiate them into a distinctively religious life. The wisdom of such a process is not founded upon individual opinion, but finds its deep foundation in the history and practices of the race."

"We find in the Protestant ideal of religious education", so the Professor tells us :

"A disposition to constant introspection, to a self-testing to see if we have the feelings, necessary to a public analysis of how we feel, or should feel. *Now all of this, or most of it, it seems to me, is not natural to the heart and mind of youth.* What yearning has the active, restless mind of a boy for rest and inward peace ; what experience has he of the trials of life, or resignation to them ; how long can he seriously think of death, and the grave, and the judgment ? How can he have an intense longing for fortitude against a host of ills which he never experienced ? how, in short, can a mind, which is by nature intensely *objective, concrete, synthetic*, ever cultivate a deep intro-

spective spirit ; how can he be expected to analyse his feelings, and especially to analyse the feelings which he *never has*, or which he can have only when he is abnormally trained ? Such ideas do not belong to youth ; they are forced and unnatural."

Consider the lilies, how they grow.

JESUS CHRIST.

"The plant of Christian character ought to thrive and grow in the human soul ; but in some sense I think it ought to grow just as the intellect grows—not by pulling it up by the roots to see how fast it is growing, or how much it has grown—but by exercise upon those things that continue its *unconscious* development. We push a boy on in his arithmetic, and encourage him to try hard examples ; we rejoice with him when he masters them ; we try to awaken his eager interest in science, or literature, or language, assured that while he is doing these things he is growing in intellectual strength. We never think, however, of trying to make him self-conscious, of trying to make him examine his own mind to see how far he has gone ; that matter takes care of itself. And so, largely, in the life of feeling, we want him to feel correctly about a thousand things, but *we never ask him to feel that he feels*. So in the religious growth. I cannot believe that this constant importunity to turn the mind in upon itself, in order that it may be conscious of its own processes, of its own states, is any

more wise or needful for actual spiritual growth, than would a similar process be in the intellectual field."

Religious culture in order to be scientific and effective must follow the laws of nature (i.e. of God). Spiritual education cannot be natural unless it works along the lines of God's orderly government of the cosmos. Nature is therefore the best guide that a teacher can have. *He must understand child-nature.* Let me quote from "The Child and Religion":—

"Profiting by the results of the psychologist's study of the child, we must try to look from the circumference into the centre of the child's soul, and also, placing ourselves at that centre, look out from it at the circumference of religious experience. This is no easy task, for religion is usually studied in adult life, and not in the life of the child. Here is a field almost unworked."

According to God's scheme, every single member of the human race begins life in a state of complete dependence. The infant is not called upon to earn its living. It realises that it is wholly dependent upon its parents, and it is not embarrassed thereby. Therefore, it would be unnatural and pernicious for the infant to attempt to earn the money to pay for its milk. And surely it is no less unnatural for the small child to attempt to earn "salvation" by screw-

ing out morbid sentiments by way of payment to God. It is the child of its earthly parents without earning son-ship by working in the mines; and it is the son of God without burrowing in its own inner consciousness for "Sudden Conversion". The Church makes a very great point of salvation itself—i.e. the *state* of being saved—but not of the exact moment when the child first becomes *self-conscious* with regard to it. God-consciousness usually precedes self-consciousness: and God's care of the infant always precedes both.

No doubt there comes a moment in the life of the infant when he first becomes conscious of the fact that he loves his *mother*; but he loves her long before he becomes definitely conscious of the fact. I ask those who are parents whether it is not so? It is not absolutely necessary that the child should be able to give the exact date and hour when it first became conscious of the fact that it loved its mother, nor does the mother withhold her love until her infant can name the hour of its response. The important thing is that the child should love mother now, and that it should display its love now in its daily behaviour. "Actions speak louder than words." But God's activity precedes ours. "We love Him because He first loved us."

If by "conversion" is meant the turning of the

whole being to God, then the Church no less than the sects, attaches every importance to it. But just as the flower may turn to the sun gradually, as the rays of light become more and more felt by the plant; so in our opinion may the soul of the infant turn towards the Sun of Righteousness, naturally, simply, easily, and gradually, from the first dawn of consciousness. In the opinion of the Churchman conversion need not be sudden, so far as consciousness of it is concerned.

With regard to conversion—sudden or otherwise—it is a “right-about turn”—a “facing about”. If it can be said of any little child: “Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven”, then if that particular child “faces about” he will be turning *away* from God. Our greatest of all authorities has said apropos of conversion: “Except ye be converted and become like little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”. And again: “Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, he shall not enter therein”. The opposite of Christ’s opinion does not strike me as being equally true, viz.: “Except ye children be changed, and become like some adults, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”.

How natural, beautiful, and divine is the simple, trustful, cheerful, and healthy religion of the little

child! It is very doubtful whether it is wise to force it, and thus transform it into something quite different. That kind of religion which impels precocious infants to inquire of their grandparents whether the latter are "saved" appears to the Anglican to be neither natural nor beautiful.

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

For what are all our contrivances,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That were ever sung or said,
For ye are the living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

LONGFELLOW.

It was something more than unique Spiritual genius which impelled Jesus Christ to place a little child in the midst of His disciples, and to give an object-lesson to the apostles, using the child (not as a symbol of the raw material upon which theologians can impress their theories), but as in some respects the ideal to which theologians themselves should aspire.

Part of the theory of the "Sudden Conversion of infants" is that it must be preceded by "conviction

of sin". First produce "conviction", and "conversion" may follow. The sinfulness of infants is the axiom upon which the theory is built up, because conversion implies change from sin to righteousness. In "The Child and Religion", published in 1905, there is an article entitled "The Conversion of Children". On page 187 we are told that all infants (however young) are guilty sinners. The dogma is proved in this way:—Physical death is the penalty for sin. Therefore those who die, demonstrate by their death, that they have deserved that penalty. Newborn infants die.¹ Therefore newborn infants are obviously deserving of the death sentence, on account of their sin. The exact words used are these:—

"If they die, thus suffering the penalty of sin, they must have sinned".

The argument is sound, but it is built up upon a premise which is wholly devoid of truth. It is false upon the face of it. Mortality in the slums is far greater among infants than amongst adults. Are infants therefore more wicked than their parents?

The idea that infants deserve to be executed is fathered upon the Book of Genesis in this way:—Because a man and his wife ate some forbidden fruit,

¹ Amongst the very poor over 55 per cent of the children die before the age of five.

all Nature, including man, was cursed.¹ But for this eating of fruit several thousands of years ago, there would have been no *physical* death.²

Apart from the idea thus given of the moral character of God—glance at the logical conclusions it leads to. Take the codfish, for instance. It has 3,000,000 eggs in its spawn. If there were no death, the rate of increase at geometrical progression of the offspring of a single couple, in three years, would be 9,990,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. Thus the sea would be one solid mass of codfish in a decade or two. "A single aphid may in one summer give rise to such a progeny, that it takes a million multiplied by itself four times to express it."³

Even the very chapter of the Book of Genesis upon which the theory (that infants deserve to be killed) is fathered, teaches us that the wages of sin is *spiritual* deadness, not physical disintegration. When

¹ A sigh too many and a kiss too long,
And there comes a mist and a weeping rain;
And the world is never the same again.

When man falls, the universe to him looks different. Really it remains much the same, but the sinner has fallen out of harmony with the cosmos. Thus to him the universe is cursed.

² Death, so far from being a curse, is but the episode which introduces the fuller life. Nothing in fiction is more awful than the picture of the Ancient Mariner condemned to live on interminably. It is not an unmixed evil that we can "see afar off the inscription of release:—then cometh the end".

³ 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. "Life and her Children", Buckley, X, 158.

Adam took the fruit he did not die (physically), but "in the day that he" disobeyed the voice of God, spiritual deadness is said to have resulted :—he tried to hide away from God's sight. A moment's thought ought to convince one that physical death is not invariably the result of spiritual sin ; but that it is part and parcel of the scheme of nature. For instance, the first man must have eaten something. Whatever he ate (whether plant or animal) must have died. Moreover, if men did not die our planet could not possibly contain the population which would result. There could be no births, if there were no deaths. Surely the prophet's prediction has been fulfilled :—

"In those days they shall say no more : The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity : every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."⁴

"If infants die, they must have sinned." This argument does not appeal to me as being convincing. However, let us pass on to the dogmas that are built up upon the axiom. If the infant has sinned he must be made aware of the fact. He is also urged to confess his sins (but not, of course, to a priest). Dr. Starbuck questioned "converted children" for the

¹ Jeremiah xxxi. 29, 30.

purpose of his elaborate statistics, and he gives us in his book some of the results of his questioning. I will quote a few of them :—

“ Everything went wrong with me. It seemed like Sunday all the time.”

(There is real pathos in this little boy’s idea of Sunday.)¹

“ I was very wicked, my heart was black.”

“ The thought of my condition was terrible.”

“ I was constantly worrying.”

“ I thought something terrible was going to happen.”

One feels so depressed by these confessions that one instinctively goes to the Gospel Story to be cheered up again. Jesus Christ and the Children ! One brightens up at the thought of the subject. Here are a few texts for children’s sermons, or Sunday School lessons :—

St. Matthew X. 42.

„ „ XI. 25.

„ „ XVIII. 3, 6, 10, 14.

„ „ XXI. 16.

St. Mark X. 13, 14, 15.

St. Luke XI. 48.

¹ “ Haste, put your playthings all away,
To-morrow is the Sabbath Day.”

Jesus Christ, who came into the world by way of the cradle and the home, dignified childhood, and taught us to respect the childishness of the very young. But even before the Incarnation, a heathen remarked that to banish childhood would be to eliminate the spring-time.

How many bitter tears have infants, and young children shed, because they were healthy and child-like, and therefore could not altogether succeed in the unnatural attempt to be morbid! How many have wept (when they ought to have been romping) because they could not become introspective before the time appointed by God! How many have been terrified by tales of Hell-Fire, instead of being soothed by the love of God their Father! George Sand says that fear is "the greatest moral suffering of children". This is true! They are naturally a prey to terror,¹ especially at night. There is hardly an infant who has not spent many an hour in the dark, shuddering with horror at some imaginary bogey. So, too, most children who have been "taught religion" will remember to their dying day the dreams they had of Hell, and of the Judgment Day.

Sully in his "Children's Ways" says: "How

¹ See Sully's article on "The Battle with Fears," in his "Children's Ways", pp. 85 to 112. Dr. G. Stanley Hall has published an elaborate "Study of Fears" (American Journal of Psychology, vol. VIII, 1897).

terrible beyond all description, all measurement with other things, these nightmare fears may be in the case of nervous children, the reminiscences of Charles Lamb, and others have told us" (p. 103). One feels instinctively that He who took up into His arms the little children, and blessed them, never frightened them with tales of Hell-Fire.

Even Plato said: "During earliest childhood the soul of the nursling should be made cheerful and kind by keeping away from him sorrow and fear and pain".

If then the end and aim of religious education of little children is not to force unduly the development of a sense of sin; if the spiritual culture of little boys and girls should consist of something other than a series of public, and private, revival meetings; if the training of the little Christian ought to be something different from the development of an abnormal, premature, and unnatural introspection, and self-consciousness—in what should culture in saintliness consist?

Well, the Church (rightly or wrongly) is of the opinion that God-consciousness, rather than self-consciousness, is the essence of religion. We believe that just as we develop eyesight—not by attracting attention to the eye, but—by exercising the faculty upon visible phenomena: so God-consciousness is developed by its exercise, rather than by the exercise of self-

consciousness. Therefore the infant's attention is drawn—not to himself—but to God. It is our aim to cultivate aspiration, rather than introspection ; and love of God, rather than fear of Hell.

For instance, the little child is taught that :—

- (1) God is love (whether the child can *measure* his own answering emotion or not).
- (2) The infant is taught the objective fact that (apart from any sentiment which he may be able to *diagnose* on his own part) he is the child of God.
- (3) The child is told the concrete fact that (apart from all infantile introspection) he is a member of Christ—i.e. he is "in Christ".
- (4) He is taught the present fact (not the future possibility) that he is within the Kingdom of Heaven—not outside it.

His mind is carefully disabused of any feeling of estrangement which he may have conjured up with regard to his Heavenly Father. He is taught to regard himself as within the home of God ; inside the fold of Christ. He is not an outsider.

- (5) The little disciple is taught (not that he is desperately wicked because Adam ate the fruit, but that) he is God's little child, and must, of course, try to act as such. Self-respect is the sheet-anchor of character.

It is also unquestionably true that children act up to (or down to) the estimate which others have of them. "Give a dog a bad name, and——" one knows the old proverb. The converse is "*Noblesse oblige*". Personally I believe that the Church acts wisely in teaching all her children that they are the sons and daughters of God.¹ It may be said that this is a dogma, and is therefore pernicious. I reply that the doctrine that the child is the son of "the wicked man who took the fruit" is no less of a dogma, than that he is the child of God. If the latter is pernicious, so too must the former be. But it is difficult to realise how one can teach any subject to children except by the dogmatic method. Children live in the concrete; they cannot grasp abstractions. Geography, History, Mathematics, Spelling, Reading, Drawing, Drill, Science—in fact everything—is taught dogmatically to children. Why should an exception be made with regard to the Science of Theology? Are religious abstractions, and spiritual and metaphysical speculations, more suitable for little children than dogmatic instruction? I admit that we do teach the fatherhood of God as an axiom, but we do not dogmatise with

¹ I once started a large swimming club for boys, and found it very difficult to get them to "duck their heads" or to dive. One weakly little fellow, however, who could hardly swim at all and was only nine or ten years old, went in without hesitation from the high dive (about 11 feet) the very first day he joined the club. The boy's father had been a distinguished soldier, who had fallen in battle when his son was an infant, and the latter did not forget that he was *his father's son*.

regard the necessity of sudden consciousness of salvation. The teaching of the Church is concrete, definite, practical, and simple. For instance, the child's attention is drawn to its concrete actions, rather than to its abstract states of consciousness. It is taught a practical religion, rather than an analytical one. When the smiling infants look up expectantly at their Sunday School teacher, she never dreams of asking such questions as the following:—

What Christian experience have you had since last Sunday?

Hands up those who have conviction of sin.

How do you know that you love God better than you love yourself?

Have any of you been saved during the week?

On the contrary they are taught to sing:—

Jesus was once a little child,
A little child like me ;
Was cradled in His mother's arms,
And sat upon her knee.
Once He was just the age I am,
And was as helpless too ;
He used to sleep and walk and speak,
Just as all children do.
And why was it He chose to be
A child so poor and weak ?
It was that I might learn from Him
How blessed are the meek ;
It was that I might learn from Him
My parents to obey,
And, like the Child of Nazareth,
Grow holier every day.

It is God-consciousness which is developed by the Anglican teacher, rather than self-consciousness. Prominence is given to the concrete and objective facts of God's existence ; God's love ; God's fatherly care ; God's grace ; God's mercy ; God's goodness ; God's justice ; God's power to help, etc., rather than to introspection. The subjects which the Church begins with are the religious discoveries of Christendom. It is assumed that the child will gradually develop the desired feelings in response, but it is never asked to *feel that it feels*. Instead of being set to work to analyse its feelings, it is instructed how to act. Realising that children are not able to live in the abstract—nor to confine their religion to its subjective side—the Church teaches them to attend to their concrete actions (rather than to their emotions) ; and to the objective facts of religion, rather than to the subjective states of consciousness.

The "fall of man" is a terrible (present) reality ; it is not merely an ancient historical episode, nor is it merely a factor in heredity. It is an individual experience which occurs in the present.

Professor Henry Jones (Glasgow) writes :—"What a child inherits are not actual *tendencies*, but potential faculties. . . . Not even the most unfortunate of human beings is born with a moral taint. . . . Character cannot be transmitted". We have ascribed to heredity too

much of the influence of environment. The Church does not regard Baptism merely as a sacrament which influences hereditary taint. Tract No. 1738, issued by the S.P.C.K. and handed round to parents after Baptism, commences as follows :—

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The Baptism is over, and you have left the church. Perhaps you are thinking, ‘Well, I’m glad it is *done*, now I shall feel more easy about the child’. But, my dear friends, is it done? Is all over when the name is entered in the Church register, and you return home? Do not think so; it is but the *beginning*.”

The Church does not lose sight of the practical side of Baptism. On the contrary, it is an essential part of her system that as soon as consciousness dawns, the baptised infant shall be carefully taught that privilege entails responsibility. This fact is made clear to the little child. Citizenship in Christ’s Kingdom carries with it the call to Christian conduct. To be the child of God obviously implies filial behaviour. To be “in Christ” is an inspiration to goodness, as well as a privilege and a dignity. This is what the Church undertakes to point out to the child. “So soon as he shall be able to learn.”

The Fall of Man, i.e. sin, is guarded against in detail, as a too common modern phenomenon in the

individual. "The Church does not baptise infants indiscriminately. She requires sponsors for their religious education ; and the sponsors represent the responsibility of the Church for the infants who are being baptised. It is not too much to say that to baptise infants without real provision for their being brought up to know what their religious profession means, tends to degrade a sacrament into a charm. On this point we need the most serious reflection."

This warning, uttered by a High Church Bishop, is part of an introduction written by him for a book penned by a Low Church Bishop, and all sections of the Church of England endorse the ideas expressed so forcibly. On the other hand, the keen spiritual intuition of Nonconformists has helped Anglicans to realize the fact that:—"On this point we still need the most serious reflection"; and shall continue to need "the most serious reflection".

The teaching given to the Anglican child is drawn out in our Catechism. No Catechism is perfect: and all such analyses can be abused. Most of the objections raised against the Church Catechism apply equally to all others ; and not only to Catechisms but to the Bible itself. There is a right and a wrong way of teaching from any text book (or analysis of that book).

In the Appendix to Bishop Knox's book, "Pastors and Teachers", will be found the following :—

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Every wise teacher knows well enough that mere words—whether learned from the Bible, or from any Catechism—are mere words. Ideas are different things altogether. Words have no value whatever apart from ideas. If words mean nothing to the child, they are worth nothing to him. It is of course obvious to any one who knows anything about the subject, that all Catechisms, as they are often taught, are almost wholly useless to the child. But when such is the case, the fault is not in the Catechisms, nor in the children, but in the teachers. The same is true of "simple Bible teaching", which is useful, or otherwise, according to the manner in which it is conducted. It may perhaps be said by some that all existing Catechisms are out of date, and that the evolution of God-consciousness has rendered them obsolete. Let me quote Canon Wilson's suggestions

with regard to the cleavage between the old and the new ways of looking at the Christian verities. The late head master of Clifton School, who is now Canon of Worcester, writes :—

“The slowness with which religious teaching is modified by advancing knowledge is very far indeed from being an uncompensated disadvantage, though it not unnaturally makes some persons very impatient, and angry, and sarcastic. I would ask such persons to reflect how absolutely essential stability and fixity of customs are in a nation, and most of all in religious teaching and observances.

“In the education of the young, and of the less reflective of our people, it would seem to be quite impossible—at any rate, *no attempt has been successful*—to teach abstract truth, or morality, except through parables, stories, and metaphors, so that it may be the more easily apprehended, and the mere imagery laid aside, when the mind ripens.

“Spiritual truths, the greatest inheritance of our race, and of slowest growth, are protected by a sheath of custom and belief and observance, with which no skilled educator, and no sympathetic religious reformer, will lightly tamper. Great care must be taken to lose nothing of what the world has slowly won, and learnt so highly to prize. Popular opinion of to-day, and even the deliberate judgment of the wisest and best men of any age,

are not final. The experience of ages embodied in institutions, and hardened into custom and prejudice, has a massive value that ardent reformers may easily underrate. The pendulum of this world swings slowly: its ticks are generations of men. We are only now finding out, in the bitter jealousy of rival sects, and the paralysis of religious education and national ideals, the results of some mistakes hastily made at the Reformation.

"Let us not underrate, as it is easy to do, the value of what I have called the protecting sheath of custom and continuity in belief. We may be able ourselves gradually to dispense with portions of it without loss: the younger generation do so earlier than their seniors. But abruptly to abandon it, or forcibly to rend it off, is not wise. It plays a larger part in the evolution of man than we can yet see."¹

On the other hand, however, the somewhat general conviction that a catechism, when once drawn up, must never be in any way altered, displays a somewhat unreasonable confidence in one's ancestors.

The Church does not try to take the "boy" or "girl" out of the child, with the idea of introducing, in its stead, something else which is advocated in some more or less excellent religious biography. It is assumed that what is natural to the religion of the child is better *for the child*, than something else which

¹ "Problems of Religion and Science", p. 5.

is unnatural at his age. But I can hardly do better than quote the words of a wise Dissenter. He says:—

“Let us be careful not to foster self-complacency, and conceit, and morbid self-introspection—where lowliness, and self-forgetfulness, and looking unto Jesus ought to be sought. . . . Glib talk is a poor substitute for hard work. Tears are cheap. Profession is easy. The tendency of ‘religion’ is too often towards talk and tears, to the neglect of toughness, and struggle, and heroism, and true faith in Christ, and hard service for Him. . . . Let us cultivate in them modesty, and fidelity to duty, and simplicity of character.”¹

Dr. William Ralph Inge writes in “Truth and Falsehood in Religion” :—

“A great deal of the religiosity which parents delight to observe in their children is pure imitation, or innocent hypocrisy, the blame for which rests on the teachers. Children are apt mimics, and soon discover that the repetition of a few phrases, easily remembered, is the shortest road to the favour of those whom they wish to please.”

I hardly feel in a position to criticise Dr. Horton's knowledge of the “Free Church Position” on the subject of religious education. He has been President of the Free Church Council, whereas I am an Anglican

¹ Mr. John H. Vincent in “The American Sunday School”.

clergyman. But in spite of these facts I cannot resist expressing my doubts as to whether Dr. Horton has made himself fully acquainted with the Nonconformist attitude towards the dogma of "The Sudden Conversion of Infants".

Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., City Temple (Congregationalist), writes¹:—

"Though great differences of opinion exist in the Nonconformist Churches on the subject of the child and religion, I believe that most of the members of my denomination would answer your questions thus:—

- (1) Is the child born in the Kingdom? Yes.
- (2) Is conversion necessary to make it a child of God? No.
- (3) Are all children in a state of favour with God? Yes.
- (4) Are all unconverted outside the Kingdom? The answer to this question depends upon the moral consciousness of the child.
- (5) May they grow up within the Kingdom without consciously being alienated from God? Yes. Many thousands do so. Their spiritual history is a *development* rather than a revolution."

I fancy that very many of those who attend the Free Church Conference would endorse the following opinion on the subject:—

¹ "The Child and Religion."

Rev. John Watson, D.D. (Ian Maclaren), (Presbyterian), writes :—

“I hold that a child may be born into the Kingdom of God when it is born into the world, and grow up within God's family, as did Jeremiah and John Baptist. I also hold that the conscious crisis called conversion is not necessary to regeneration, for the opposite would mean that every one had to go astray and be brought back to God at a distinct point in his life, which is not the case.”

Here is an opinion from America. (I hope the reader will try to pardon me for quoting so freely. I do so because I do not wish to protrude my own opinions oftener than I can help.) The following is the view of Dr. Clay Trumbull, formerly Normal Secretary of the American Sunday School Union, and editor of the “American Sunday School Times”¹ :—

“Many a teacher is more anxious to learn if a scholar has been converted, than to learn if that scholar believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. And if on an examination a scholar gives satisfactory evidence that at a certain time he was converted, *that*, in the opinion of many an examiner, settles the case for him. It is an ‘end of work’ in his behalf. It matters little what he seems to think of Christ. His conversion being sound, he is saved

¹ “Teaching and Teachers”, p. 271.

—saved by conversion, rather than by Christ. So conversion comes to stand in such a case, not only for regeneration, but for salvation—even for Christ Himself. Christ is lost sight of, overshadowed, through the undue prominence given to the fact of conversion.

“This is not an overstatement of the error in question. On every side are evidences of the mistake and its consequences. Members of many a Sunday School who might be desirous of being received into full Church-membership would be inquired of, not so much on the point whether they *now* love and trust the Lord Jesus, as on the point, *when* they were converted—or, as the questioner, perhaps, would put it, when they were born anew; not so much concerning the evidence which their present course furnishes of their fidelity to their Divine Master, as concerning the evidence they can supply that their conversion was a sound and a thorough one. In this way many young disciples are taught to look within at themselves, rather than outward and upward at their Saviour. And gradually, in many cases, the pre-eminent question with them comes to be—not, ‘Is my Saviour to be trusted?’ but—‘Was my conversion unmistakable?’ If they have conscious peace, it rests on the fact of their conversion, rather than on their Saviour’s promises. If, on the other hand, they are in doubt, it is because they fear there was some flaw in their conversion.

“This philosophy of salvation has been thrust in

the face of young children . . . as if it were something which limited their personal duty, or barred their privilege. It has been made a barrier and a stumbling-block to those who would enter the service of Christ."

I quote the opinions of these Free Church gentlemen in order to suggest that the unfortunate differences at present existing between Churchmen and other Christians with regard to the Sudden Conversion of Infants, may not be so hopelessly divergent as some extremists are apt to suppose. And, after all, the type of saintliness produced in all kinds of Christian Sunday Schools, is very much the same throughout the world. I mean that different methods produce the same results, very often. It has always been so, apparently. As the Eastern sage expressed it long ago :—

"The schools of philosophy are always in conflict, and the noise of their passionate discussions rises like the waves of the sea. Heretics of the different sects attach themselves to particular teachers, and, by different routes, walk to the *same goal*."—HIOUEN THSANG.

St. Paul wrote (1 Cor. i. 10, etc.) :—

Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be

perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?

We shall most of us agree that "conversion is not necessary for those who are living a converted life"; and that "it is far less important to know when you crossed the frontier, and how you did it, than to be sure that to-day you are on the right side." Let us for the sake of the dear little children avoid magnifying unnecessarily our differences of opinion with regard to their spiritual education in Public Elementary Schools. *Odium Theologicum* cannot be pleasing to Him whom all of us profess to serve. Nor does sectarian bitterness prove our loyalty to Him who has said: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another."¹ Some of us "know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."² May I be pardoned for the narrowness and uncharitableness of which I have been guilty in the above article, as I forgive those who display the same characteristics on the other side.

¹ St. John XIII. 35.

² 1 St. John III. 14.

CONFIRMATION

SOMEWHERE between the ages of thirteen and seventeen the young people cease to be children. This is a critical period. When each pupil reaches this critical stage he must be dealt with accordingly. He must be approached on the subject. He must be asked if he is ready to come forward publicly and profess himself on Christ's side. The time has arrived when he must make an active stand. He must, *if he has not already done so*,¹ fight the "Great Battle of Decision".

This matter (for the Anglican) comes under the heading:—Confirmation. It is the goal towards which every Anglican teacher—who has any definite plan to work to—gradually directs his pupils' steps.

In the normal development of the child's spiritual life there comes, in the ordinary course of events,

¹ One of the questions which every baptised child is asked as soon as possible is to this effect: "Do you not think that you are now—at once—bound to believe in and serve God?" The child is taught to reply somewhat as follows: "Yes indeed, and by God's help so I will do."

what one may call Flood Tide. As Shakespeare said :—

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.¹

The teacher watches the “waves”, so to speak, but does not talk to the child very much about the movements of the waters. The teacher, as I say, keeps a watchful eye upon the general movement of the tide, but does not attract the child’s attention too much to the flowing stream. The teacher’s attention is absorbed in watching for the flood tide of religious life, which may be expected soon after puberty is reached. The parent also has kept loving and prayerful watch for the spiritual change which may be expected to develop. The crisis is being prepared for privately. It is not made public. It is not advertised.

For many years I wholly failed to understand—and therefore to appreciate—Nonconformity. When I found out my mistake I could not help making allowances for Nonconformists when they misjudged us. I was compelled to realise that mutual misunderstanding is exceedingly natural.

The Anglican is more reticent about his spiritual life than the Dissenter. The former does not talk so much about his soul. The result is that he is some-

¹ “Julius Cæsar”, Act IV, Scene 3.

times misunderstood. Let me give one or two illustrations of what I mean :—A Nonconformist acquaintance of mine, referring to a man who had left Dissent and become an Anglican, expressed himself thus : “He has given up religion, and joined the Church.” My friend had acquired the habit, which is repressed by the Anglican, of estimating religious zeal by the amount displayed on the surface in ordinary conversion. The Churchman is never garrulous about his soul.

A certain well-known revivalist who knew that I was a clergyman, once told me that “most of the clergy are not saved”. (They did not stand up at his sudden conversion meetings.¹)

A little boy, who had attended a revival meeting, came away with a large number of little slips of paper upon which were printed

“Get right with God”.

These he proceeded solemnly to distribute to the teachers, and children, of a certain very excellent Church Sunday School, as they trooped out into the street. He seemed to take it for granted that, being

¹ I once attended a Nonconformist Revival Meeting, and not being able to find a chair near the door I had to stand. When the preacher asked those who had been converted at the meeting to stand, I was not able to sit down. The result was that I read in the paper that “An Anglican clergyman was Saved.”

Churchmen, the teachers and children had yet to "Get right with God".

I could give many anecdotes which tend to show that some Nonconformists misunderstand Anglicans and assume that they lack (to some extent at least) what the former call "conversion". It is supposed by those who do not know, that the Church does not make enough of the "Great Battle of Decision". It is considered that the Anglican Clergyman is remiss in uttering the cry, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve". It is said that we have no adequate place in our scheme of salvation for the prophet's question: "How long halt between two opinions?" The question arises, Is it a fact that the Church does not sufficiently realise the importance of our Lord's warning that: "No man can serve two masters: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"? Does the Anglican system lead the Churchman to "Decision for Christ"?

The reply is that not only does the Church hold occasional missions,¹ but she sets apart the seasons of Advent and Lent, every year, for the special purpose of adequately considering this matter. And not only does the Church, on at least 60 days out of the 365, preach from the text "Repent ye," but the aim of all her religious teaching of the child is to so develop his spiritual life that he will come forward voluntarily for Confirmation *when the right time arrives*.

That is to say Revivals.

What is meant by coming forward for Confirmation?

According to the Church there are two aspects from which Confirmation should be regarded simultaneously:—the human, and the divine. The human side—the part played by the Confirmer—includes “Decision”; active “public profession”; conscious, and voluntary surrender to God’s will, etc. etc. But the attention of the candidate is not concentrated solely upon *himself*; upon his emotions; his public profession, etc. He is taught to think also, and chiefly, about God’s activity in the matter. There are two sides to religion, because it consists of the relationship between God and Man. Of the two sides, neither the Godward nor the manward can be ignored, without very serious disaster.

When the Confirmation period arrives—for each child—then a public and definite act is called for. It is then that what had to some extent been subconscious in the religion of the Child, is brought to the surface, and enters the centre of the field of consciousness. At the time when the lad or lass needs the additional grace which the larger life demands, then he is taught to look to God for it, and to prepare for Confirmation and Holy Communion. In short the Church attaches quite as much importance to Confirmation (with all that that means to

the Anglican) as the Dissenter does to the sudden conversion of children. It is not conversion which is absent from the religion of the Anglican, but the importance attached to *Sudden Consciousness* of it.

Confirmation is the necessary compliment of Infant Baptism ; or rather it is the postponed part of the Sacrament.

The preparation for Confirmation begins as soon as the baptized infant is capable of learning anything ; and as soon as he is susceptible to any influence. But the child is not necessarily told anything about the end in view, until such time as he is likely to understand its significance. The teacher himself has the goal in view, but he may only draw the child's attention to "ye next step" on the way to the distant goal. The following is an extract from the Confirmation Service :—

Then shall the Bishop say (to the Confirmation Candidates),

Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism—ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you ?

And every one shall audibly answer,

I do.

The religion both of the Churchman, and of the Dissenter, consists in relationship with God. But speaking generally, the former looks to God more than to himself; the latter is introspective.¹ The Churchman's tastes turn to theology, rather than to psychology; the Nonconformist's tendency is the reverse. The Anglican's attention is drawn towards God's attitude to man; the Dissenter's attention is attracted rather to his own attitude towards God. Both the objective and the subjective aspects of religion are necessary, and those of us who are apt to look too exclusively in the one direction may learn much from those whose tendency is the opposite one. Personally I owe very much to what I have learned from Nonconformity, and no doubt I have yet much to learn from it. Possibly some Nonconformists may learn something from Anglicans. It is human to look at one side of the truth; but it is common sense to assume that there may also be another side.

¹ I owe the following anecdote to a Nonconformist:—Wilberforce devoted so much time and energy to the cause of emancipating the slaves that an old lady rebuked him thus:—"You are neglecting your own salvation!" To which the great philanthropist replied:—"I have, as you say, had no time to think about my own salvation"; and he smiled contentedly. Or as another version has it:—"True, madam, I had forgotten that I have a soul."

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

ASSUMING that one knows :—

- (1) What to teach ;
- (2) How to teach ;¹
- (3) Those who have to be taught ; and
- (4) How much one will be able to teach in the time at one's disposal ; it remains to be considered :
- (5) Who is to do the teaching ?

Of course, it is more than one man's work to educate in saintliness the several hundreds of children of a parish. A single individual cannot possibly be sufficiently intimate with so many different souls simultaneously—each one of whom needs his own particular and personal kind of treatment. No two children have indentially the same character, or environment. Therefore organization is necessary, in order to give to each child the amount of thought, prayer, time, etc., that are required for his spiritual culture. Consequently one has to ask :—What

¹ I have already dealt with this subject in "The Training of the Twig".

machinery is there for this work? What is the nature of the existing machinery? How far is it adequate? In what ways can it be improved?

Take Sunday Schools, for instance :—

It is a common jest that they are inefficient; but having made our venerable little joke, we have not thereby solved the exceedingly difficult problem before us. It is common knowledge that more and more of the burden of religious education must inevitably fall upon Sunday Schools. The work of professionals will have to be increasingly, supplemented by that of amateurs. It follows that what is required of us is (not so much to grumble at, as) to improve Sunday Schools, which deal every week with the vast majority of the children of the poor. Several thousands of saintly men and women are working persistently, zealously, and hopefully, year after year, in this most important field of Christian effort. They receive little encouragement, and less instruction, although they are sadly in need of both. On the contrary, they have to put up with much good-humoured chaff from their friends; and frequently with active opposition from their relations. But their piety, and enthusiasm, are very infectious—the children unconsciously catch their spirit, even when the little rascals are very conscious of the fact that they do not learn much theology.

There is no reason why Sunday Schools should not be very greatly improved. For instance, when the parson sets a really high ideal before the teachers, and makes considerable efforts to raise the standard of the work, the teachers who are not in earnest leave in disgust.¹ Thus room is made for an influx of enthusiastic ones. The latter are attracted, and the former are repelled, in proportion to the exalted nature of the ideal set before them. Moreover, in those Sunday Schools where anything is considered "good enough" teachers are scarce; and vice versa. Both the quantity and quality of Church workers, in any part of Christ's vineyard, are most satisfactory where the requirements of the post are most exacting, and most difficult to satisfy.

Even the best teachers, however, need instruction (as well as zeal). Enthusiasm will do much, but it will, of course, accomplish far greater and better results when it is guided by wisdom and discretion; and when it is supplemented with some knowledge of correct methods. It is the clergyman's business to see to this matter. It is one of the countless tasks that devolve upon the poor distracted man. Of course, he cannot impart to others knowledge of an art which he does not himself possess; and he

¹ One of the most difficult of Sunday School problems is: how to get rid of the teachers who are worse than useless.

cannot know what he has not learned ; and he cannot learn without the expenditure of much time, effort, and practice. He also needs instruction from some one who knows how to teach. Unfortunately "*Ars longa, vita brevis*". If the clergyman cannot himself carefully instruct his teachers, he ought to find some one else who can.

The clergyman has to see that the children's religious culture is adequately arranged for. There can be no doubt that he is responsible for it. At the same time he is, after all, merely a finite being, and therefore his capacities are limited. If he had fewer calls upon his time and energies he would the better accomplish the multitudinous, and very varied, duties which daily fall to his lot. The fact is that too much is demanded of him. For instance, whatever else he may be excused, he must, of course, be a good preacher.¹ In other words, he must, at whatever cost :—

(1) Thoroughly know his subject (religion), which is a very large and difficult one, especially in its modern environment.

(2) Know how to deal with the subject (religion), so as to do justice to his theme.

¹ It may be said that few are good preachers. I am not, however, describing what a parson is and does, but on the contrary, what he is expected to be and do.

(3) Know how to preach year after year to the same audience without becoming monotonous, or dull.

(4) He must be able to appeal simultaneously to a mixed congregation, consisting of:—

- (a) All ages.
- (b) All stages of intellectual culture.
- (c) All degrees of mental capacity.
- (d) All classes of society.
- (e) All stages of spiritual development.
- (f) Those who believe fiercely in verbal inspiration.
- (g) Those who have calmly accepted the results of modern criticism.
- (h) The emotional; the philosophical; the devotional; the practical; the scientific, etc. etc.

Whatever else the preacher may possibly be ignorant of, he must certainly know a great deal about:—

Religion (because he can only impart to others that which he himself possesses).

Theology (because it is the logical conception of religion; and one cannot teach religion clearly, and coherently, unless one has a logical conception of it).

Ecclesiastical History (because he must be able to give a reason for his Churchmanship).

Human Nature (because in order to deliver his message with directness, he must know those to whom he has to speak).

General Literature (because the man who knows only one subject is always a bore, and no one listens to him).

Modern Thought (because every preacher has to address—not the ancients—but the people of to-day).

Composition (because it is of no use to have a message if one cannot express it in intelligible and forcible language).

Delivery (because otherwise what the preacher says, however excellent it may be, will inevitably fall flat).

Voice production (because if he is indistinct, his audience will not trouble to listen, and therefore will not hear him).

But preaching is only one of very many things which the clergyman has to do. For instance, he must be a good all-round parish priest. As such he is, of course, expected to be able to deal adequately with:—

Confirmation Candidates of all kinds; young and old, cultured and ignorant, male and female, etc.

The dying rogue.

The Jumble-Sale.

The boys' Cricket, and Football Clubs, etc. etc.

Criminals.

The District Visitors' Meeting.

The Men's Club.

The bereaved household.

The wedding party.

The Parochial finances.

The Labour Bureau.

The dying saint.

The drunkard.

The Mothers' Meeting.

Poverty.

The Men's Bible Class.

The Penny Bank.

The Women's Communicants' Guild.

The incurable invalids.

The Committee Meeting.

The Clothing Club ; Coal Club, etc.

The honest doubter.

The Soup Kitchen, etc. etc.

In order to rise to the occasion he must, of course, be :—

A saint.

An excellent judge of character.

A good business man.

A good extempore speaker on all kinds of subjects, and upon every sort of occasion.

Possessed of the Pastor's heart, and well endowed with the "charity which hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil".

Richly endowed with the gift of judicious silence ; and well able to keep a secret.

A man of prayer.

A student of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek.

A capable apologist for Christianity.

Equally at home with every class of society, every age, and both sexes.

A good organizer.

A useful, cheerful, and welcome, guest at all kinds of parties, and treats.

A general enquiry agent, and living encyclopædia.

A good chairman.

A good disciplinarian.

A wise, tender, and firm relieving officer.

An energetic beggar.

A man of tact, originality, influence, sympathy, firmness, etc. etc.

He must be full of indomitable hope, and perseverance, and possessed of an unconquerable belief in the possibilities of Human Nature.

In fact, he must be everything that may be needed ; and all this *without special training*.¹ He has, in fact,

¹ Special training (at Theological Colleges or otherwise) is not insisted upon. Those who can afford such works of supererogation, and who avail themselves of such training, are the exception rather than the rule.

to learn all these things day by day as he does his daily work.

Consequently, he must, of course, be a very Jew in the matter of economy. (I refer to the economy of time.) On his bookshelves are works upon Pastoral Theology, containing information as to how he should spend his day. The following is a rough sketch of just a few of the things which the books tell him imperatively that he must make time for every day. (There are many other things which are very important, but, not being absolutely necessary, may, perhaps, be crowded out; but the following are imperatively necessary, and he must, at whatever cost, find time for all of them each day.)

Hours

1. Private Prayer, and Meditation.

½. Daily Matins.

1. Study of Old Testament in Hebrew.

1. Study of New Testament in Greek.

1. Reading of Higher Criticism.

2. Study of	{	Modern Philosophy. Natural Science of all kinds. The Fathers. Apologetics. Pastoral Theology. Devotional Literature. Social Problems. Psychology.
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Hour

1. Study of the Bible in English, with Commentaries.
3. Sermon Preparation.
2. Preparation for various speeches, addresses, classes, etc.
3. District Visiting.
2. Meetings of various kinds.
1. Social Intercourse.
- $\frac{1}{2}$. Evensong.
1. Reading Religious Papers, Volumes of Sermons, etc. etc.
2. Evening classes, clubs, guilds, etc.
1. to 2. Rushing about.
2. Interviews with people who want to beg, or to ask innumerable questions, such as these:—
 (Q) "Mrs. X. is half starved. Mr. X. eats up the meat I give her. What shall I do?"
 (A) "Here is an order for Cod-liver oil."
1. Writing letters.
- $\frac{1}{2}$. Self-examination with regard to the sins of omission committed during the day: repentance for the same: and good resolutions for the morrow,

It will be seen that I have only mentioned some few of the things which every clergyman must, at all costs, find time for during the twenty-four hours; yet

in spite of the incompleteness of the list, the necessary time totals up to over twenty-six hours per diem.¹ And yet I have not included the time which it is imperatively necessary to spend upon teaching children ; learning how to teach them ; preparing the Sunday School teaching ; and organizing their work. As I have already remarked, the children are the most important half of the community. Obviously, something of less importance must be left out in order to make room for the clergyman's most promising work. No doubt, if he omits any of the less important items demanded by the adults, he will be blamed by many of them ; whereas the children do not complain if they are neglected. That, however, is not the point. Besides, he is certain to be blamed by many people—whatever he may do. It is impossible for any mere man to satisfy half the demands that are made upon the average curate. No one expects any thing of the kind ; except perhaps the poor clergyman himself. No wonder that so many parish priests break down in their attempt to do the impossible. The average clergyman reminds me irresistibly of an ants' nest with

¹ It may be said that no writer on the subject of Pastoral Theology would be guilty of such an absurdity as to require a clergyman to work more than twenty-four hours a day. That is true. I have compiled my list from more than one book. If I had consulted another I should have had to add many more items.

the top kicked off. He is "distracted".¹ Not ten per cent keep the fourth Commandment, in so far as rest is concerned. The result is that, being always tired, many clergymen do no really good work. They habitually "burn the candle at both ends", and by so doing, defeat their own object. One must be fresh if one would sway children; one must not be dead tired if one is to inspire adults. It is most important that one should not fuss about nervously all day long, attempting to do too many things—and doing all of them indifferently in consequence. It is a mistake to be so "cumbered by much serving", as to leave inadequate time and energy for the "one thing needful".

From the point of view of our subject there are two kinds of vicar. Let us call them respectively A. and B.

A. overworks himself in a hundred different ways, all of them most useful, no doubt, but none of which includes the religious education of the children. He is a man perhaps who emphatically disagrees with the late Bishop Gott's remark that: "House-to-house visiting is a clumsy, and unworkmanlike way of spending one's day."² Or else he spends his energies in collecting subscriptions, attend-

¹ ἡ δὲ Μάρθα περιεσπᾶτο περὶ πολλήν διακονίαν.

² "The Parish Priest of the Town", p. 44.

ing meetings, and "serving tables" generally. He is convinced that Sunday Schools always have been, and therefore always will be a failure, and he acts consistently upon his conviction.

B., on the other hand, is sure that Sunday Schools—like most other things—are whatever one makes them. He is convinced that every agency for Spiritual Culture is worth just so much as it costs in prayer, zeal, thought, energy, time, etc.—and that it is worth no more. Therefore in order that his schools may be worth something, he takes care to have something left to give them in the way of prayer, energy, time, etc. He does not completely exhaust himself in other activities.

A. seldom enters his Sunday Schools, except—occasionally—to take the prayers, after which he hurriedly departs. Sometimes, however, he makes an exception to his rule and, by idle gossiping, keeps the Superintendent from his duties, during the most important part of his time ; after which he proceeds to go round the schools shaking hands with each teacher in turn. He utters a few commonplace remarks of a friendly but irrelevant nature, just as the worried teacher is beginning, after much difficulty, to get his class in hand, and to hold the attention of his restless pupils. Occasionally, if the Vicar wants money for one of his pet schemes (unconnected with education),

he rings the bell when the teachers are in the middle of the lesson, and in a somewhat inaudible voice, and in language not intelligible to children, asks for subscriptions (which are not forthcoming). Sometimes he harangues them about his family affairs (e.g. the illness in his family) just as the teachers have reached the climax of their lessons, and are beginning to apply the moral.

B., who has recently come to the parish, proceeds on a different principle. He goes to the Boys' Sunday School early in the morning, in order to make friends with the teachers before they begin their morning's work. Having been asked to take the prayers, he endeavours to give a hint to the children, to the teachers, and to the Superintendent, as to how he considers that the devotions should be conducted. He knows that all eyes are fixed upon the "new parson", and he takes the opportunity of deliberately setting a very high ideal of reverence and order. In fact, he gives them a valuable object-lesson. Example is always far better than Precept. After prayers he takes care not to interrupt either the Superintendent, or teachers, by talking to them when they ought to be hard at work. He knows how he himself would feel if, when he was preaching, some one were to ask earnestly after his maiden aunt or his mother-in-law. He quietly watches the proceedings with the intense

and intelligent interest of the man who is quite clear in his own mind as to how things should be done, and who is firmly resolved that they shall gradually conform to his ideal. Indirectly, his unobtrusive presence, and his obvious enthusiasm, inspire the teachers. In the afternoon he inspects the Girls' Sunday School in the same way ; and looks in at the Infant School in time to take the concluding prayers. Early on the following Monday afternoon he starts out to call on his Superintendents and teachers, in order to renew his acquaintance with them,—one at a time. He knows that it is imperatively necessary that he should exercise his influence to its fullest extent upon all his *συνεργοί*¹ (fellow-workers), as SS. John and Paul called them. He knows from his own experience how laborious, nerve-exhausting, and thankless is the task of his Sunday School *ἀντιληψείς*² (helps). Bishop Creighton remarked :—³

“ I have frequently asked Sunday School teachers, before addressing a meeting of their body, what topics they considered most useful. The answers which I have received always took this shape:— ‘ Tell us to go on and not despond ; tell us to persevere.’ ”

¹ 3 S. John 8 and Phil. iv. 3, etc.

² 1 Cor. xii. 28.

³ “ Thoughts on Education.”

The new Vicar praises and encourages the teachers, individually, and he thanks them for their valuable assistance in the Church work of the parish. He gives them to understand that he has a very high estimate of the importance of the work they are engaged upon. He shows them that he expects great things of them. He invites them—one at a time, and in person—to attend a teachers' meeting which he intends to hold at the end of the week, for the purpose of discussing the work which (as he expresses it) "they all have so much at heart."

There are two methods of inviting people to a meeting, the right way and the wrong way. For instance, take the latter:—"I am half thinking of having a meeting some day soon, if—which is exceedingly doubtful—I can persuade any one to attend it. Meetings are so dull, aren't they? ha! ha! Well, if any one will undertake to come, I will try and remember to send you a notice of it. Good-bye."

Our friend the new Vicar, however, adopts the reverse method, and does not admit the bare possibility of any one being unwilling, or unable, to attend his meeting. He is an annoying man in some respects; all enthusiasts are: but no good work can be done without enthusiasm.

There are also two ways of *conducting* a meeting of voluntary helpers, who often feel inclined to despair,

and to give up the thankless task. For instance, there is :—

- (1) The Magisterial method ; and
- (2) The Pauline or Tactful way.

Both methods may (or may not) display the “fortiter in re”; but the one differs from the other in that the former does not adopt the “Suaviter in modo” and the latter does. Sometimes, apparently, it is forgotten that a teachers’ meeting is made up of human beings, many of whom are exceedingly human. They are individually and collectively human ; and human nature has two characteristics which are practically universal :—

- (1) A strong natural aversion to undisguised coercion ; and
- (2) A strong natural tendency to follow a capable leader.

Nothing so forcibly strikes a newly ordained curate (who in spite of the inevitable self-confidence of youth, is conscious of some few of his deficiencies) as the tendency of all Church workers to look up to him as a capable leader. The clergyman’s position being thus secure, it is unwise, and unnecessary, to make a parade of authority ; and to act like a Russian Grand Duke surrounded by his peasants. As I have said, every meeting consists of human beings, who attach some importance to their own

wishes and opinions, and who struggle to preserve their dignity as freeborn citizens, who are paid nothing for their services.

The motto "no taxation without representation", is consciously, or unconsciously adopted, and applied by all. Knowing this, the Vicar acts accordingly. He intends to tax the energies of his teachers, and to tax them to the very utmost ; consequently he consults their opinions and wishes, and as far as possible, instead of dogmatically asserting his own. Knowing what he wants ; why he wants it ; and how to justify his ideals ; he can afford to put each point before the teachers as a topic for discussion, rather than as a command. Being in a position to lead, it is unnecessary for him to drive. Therefore he adopts the method of the Eastern—rather than of the Western—shepherd. He prefers to lead, when driving is not necessary. Knowing himself to be qualified, not merely to offer advice, but also to so justify his advice as to make it irresistibly obvious, he can afford to open up each new idea in the form of a question—an appeal to the opinion of the meeting. He knows that he can guide the formation of that opinion, in such a way as to make the teachers feel that it is their own opinion, and not merely his, that is being adopted. He wins the sympathy of those who, perhaps, have attended the meeting somewhat

reluctantly, by giving them the impression that they have assembled, not to be lectured, nor to be preached at,¹ but to put their heads together in order to pool the brains and experience of all, for the benefit of each. He gives them to understand that it is a mutual work that they are engaged upon ; and that they are met together as "many members of one body" of fellow-labourers. Somehow the Vicar (to some extent) monopolises the conversation, which is about their mutual work. But the teachers feel that if he speaks most it is because he knows most. He, as it were, thinks aloud, and voices the thoughts of all, when he speaks of the importance and difficulty of the work. He looks at the subject from their point of view, rather than from his own. Yet he speaks of his own failures and difficulties. He says :—

"If I had to teach a class of boys or girls ; and if I felt that I only had one hour a week in which to do it ; and that they would only be under my charge for six years ; I should feel how great was the responsibility and difficulty of my task. Only 300 hours in which to educate them in saintliness ! I should try to make up my mind what religious knowledge is absolutely essential, and what is not.

¹ A friend of mine informed me that he was thinking of writing a book on "The Preached at Life".

Not being able to teach the whole of the Bible or Prayer Book, I should have to make up my mind what parts to leave untouched. Having made up my mind *What* to teach, I should of course have to decide in what order to impart the desired information. In addition to knowing what to teach, I should also have to know *How* to teach.

“But supposing that I succeeded in teaching them all the theological facts which it is imperative that they should know, that would not in itself make them good Christians. Religion does not consist merely of intellectual knowledge, it includes spiritual life, and moral action. There is a difference between theory and practice. I should have to arouse and train the conscience of each one of my pupils, so that every individual would be able to distinguish between right and wrong. That, however, would be no good by itself. ‘He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin’.¹ I should have to persuade them to obey the dictates of conscience. They must act upon their knowledge. They must love goodness, and practise it, as well as know it when they see it.

“Nay, more, their wills must be developed—a dogged perseverance in well-doing must be cultivated.

¹ St. James IV. 17.

"But of themselves they can do nothing, they must love, trust, and have faith in the Triune God. They must also possess a clear, and practical knowledge of how to pray to Him ; and they must habitually act upon their knowledge.

"While I am doing all that I can to educate them in saintliness—one hour a week—they are being distracted by countless temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, seven days a week. And soon they will pass out of my hands altogether.

"Now, you teachers who share with me the work of religious education, have all these difficulties that I have mentioned, and some additional ones. For instance, personally, I should take my class by itself—in a separate room. You, on the other hand, have to contend against the manifold distractions which are inevitable when many classes are being taught in the same room. Yours is a more difficult art than mine.

"Then again, having gained an influence over the boys, I could carry it on, and increase it, from year to year. You, on the contrary, must of necessity have a new lot of children each year, when the inevitable Easter promotions take place.¹

"These children—these impressionable souls—remain in our hands but for a short time only, on their

¹ The Day School promotions affect the Sunday School.

way to an endless eternity which will depend very much, of course, upon what we are enabled to do for them here. The children are at the parting of the ways. How exceedingly difficult, and how tremendously important, is our work! Yet we are but amateurs, who have still very much to learn. I trust that all of us have, already, an intense zeal; indomitable energy; and unflagging perseverance. I presume that we all have great trust in God, Who having given us this task, is sure to help us with it. Doubtless we have Hope, which the Apostle couples with Faith. We must not be despondent, because:—‘They always win who side with God’. We have, also, I presume, much love both for God our Father, and for the children whom He has committed to our charge. Thus we are in a position to woo the latter over to the Former. Every child responds to love.¹ No doubt we are often on our knees before God, asking for that help from above, which we know from experience that we receive. It is not our intention to ‘give to God that which costs us nothing’, nor will we give to the little ones for whom Christ died

¹ An elaborate attempt was made to entice a boy away from a certain Sunday School which was obviously in very many respects an inferior one. The boy admitted that all the arguments used by his tempter were forcible, and just, but he remained wholly unconvinced. His own school had one attraction which was irresistible. Ultimately the boy mentioned what it was, he said shamefacedly:—“They love a fellow over there.”

anything but our very best. On the contrary, we repeat with enthusiasm S. Paul's words:—'I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls'.¹

"We have assembled here to cheer each other up, because we so easily lose heart when we work alone. We are here, too, in order to help each other with the power which is born of the communion of Saints. We are engaged in a great art, and we do not intend to be (well meaning) bunglers of it. Art is another name for skill, and we are not of the number of those that think that skill is necessary for everything secular, but that it can be dispensed with when one's work is done for God. On the contrary, our very best must be given to Him. Skill can only be acquired, of course, by those who seek it with wisdom and perseverance. Some of us have more time to give to our art, than others have. But at least we will all of us give whatever time, energy, thought, and talent we can.

"In order to paint a good picture, the artist must have skill, born of the infinite capacity for taking pains. In order to design a cathedral, the architect must put his very soul into the work. In order to produce a presentable statue, the sculptor must not only be willing, but must also know how to produce the desired result. We too are artists, who work upon

¹ 2 Cor. XII. 15, R.V.

the most precious of all materials, the immortal souls of impressionable children. We work, not for the praise of man, but for God ; not for time merely, but for eternity.

“We are not of the number of those who are content with merely holding an important office, or filling a responsible position. We regard it to be no less important to have some idea as to *how to fulfil the duties of that position*. We who strive to do our Master’s work, remember that He spent thirty years in preparing for three and a half years’ teaching. If He did not dispense with preparation—shall we? It may be that we have as yet much to learn, both of our message, and also of how to deliver it. But at least we can say that ‘whatsoever our hands find to do we do it with our might’.¹ We have already learned, in the expensive school of experience, that our work is worth as much as it costs, in thought and prayer, *and no more*.

“Moreover, it is thoroughness which makes our work so fascinating. We feel that here we have ample scope for all the powers which God has given us.

“We are finding out what a joy it is to serve God and humanity. Here is an object in life which has nothing paltry or selfish about it. Here is a labour

¹ Eccles. ix. 10.

of love which is worth living for. We can sympathize with him who wrote, 'Blessed is he who has found his work! Let him ask no other blessing.'

"As you know, it is a common jest that Sunday Schools are absurdly inefficient. Doubtless many are. *Our* Schools, however, shall not be of the number that cause contemptuous amusement. Even the best of Sunday Schools can be improved indefinitely, therefore there remains much for us to do in the way of improving ours.

"I am assuming that, like myself, you are all of St. Paul's opinion when he said :—'I count not myself to have as yet obtained, nor to be already perfect, but I press on; this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching out to those things which are before, I press towards the goal.'¹

"It is true that most of us have been teaching for many years, but so too had St. Paul when he wrote the words which I have just quoted. He had, in fact, done nearly the whole of his life's work, but he had not lowered his ideal in discouragement; quite the contrary. Aspiration is the measure of achievement. 'They can conquer who believe they can.' Or rather, those who believe that they 'can do all things through Christ who strengthens them',² are not relying upon a broken reed."

¹ Phil. III. 12-15.

² Phil. IV. 13.

But it is a very great mistake, and a very common one, to get into the habit of making long speeches at Teachers' Meetings. Realizing this fact, the Vicar would perhaps conclude somewhat as follows:—

"I must ask your pardon for monopolizing the time of the Meeting. Has any one any suggestions to make?"

At this point Mr. Jones, Boys' School Superintendent (having been tactfully prompted by the Vicar some days previously) proposes that they have a Teachers' Meeting the following week. This is seconded by the Superintendent of the Girls' School (she having received the compliment early in the week, of a visit from the Vicar, who called to ask her *advice* with regard to the subject). After some discussion it is unanimously decided to do so.

The subject of the next Sunday's lesson could afterwards be dealt with.

WHAT TO TEACH

THE Parson is theoretically responsible for the religious education of the children in the Sunday Schools. Consequently we may assume that he feels strongly that, in the first place, he must at least know what should be the general aim of the teaching given. If he is a wise man, he will give much thought, and prayer to the consideration of this subject. If he is not a wise man, he will merely dogmatise and say: "The Church 350 years ago provided the Catechism; that is sufficient; the problem has been solved, once for all, by those who drew up the Catechism." He will then simply tell the teachers to compel the children to commit it all to memory, from N or M to the definition of the Sacraments. The teachers, however, who, for the most part, are apt to follow the line of least resistance, will probably, as far as possible, avoid taking this course, because it is most strongly objected to by their pupils.

Some teachers will carefully avoid forcing the children to commit the Catechism to memory, because of the great difficulty of doing so.

Others will persistently avoid this irksome task, because they feel that the very essence of the art of education is to interest, and to hold the attention of the pupils; and that the Catechism bores children intensely, and is always very much objected to by them. Others will neglect to teach it, on the ground that every modern educationalist maintains most strongly, as the chief axioms of his art, that examples should precede rules; that the concrete should be taught before the abstract; that experience must come before deduction; that the simple must be learned before the complex; that facts should be taught before their definitions; ideas before phraseology; religion before theological dogmas; and so on.

Other teachers will endeavour to shirk the teaching of the Catechism, on the ground that the capacity to repeat words and phrases (however excellent they may be) is not synonymous with saintliness. They will contend that the essence of religion is relationship with God, rather than a feat of memory. They do not believe in the "parrot-like repetition of unintelligible words".

Others will consistently avoid teaching the Catechism on the ground that the requirements of the child should suggest the subject to be taught; and that the fitness of any subject to the needs of the

pupil may be measured by the latter's interest in it, and attraction towards it.¹ That is to say, that Nature is the best guide ; intellectual and spiritual appetite being God's own hint as to what will benefit the pupil most.

Other teachers, however (perhaps the majority), will make some kind of attempt to do as they are told, and will endeavour to force the phraseology of the Catechism into the unwilling minds of the restless children.

Theirs not to reason why !
Theirs but to do and die !

The Bishop of Manchester writes :—

“ The Day School has followed the lines which have proved successful in scientific inquiry. It has accommodated its principles to the philosophic thought of the day. Education no longer consists in beating into a child rules which he cannot understand, and leaving him to think them out for himself. It does not trust to loading the memory with technical jargon. It does not say to the child, ‘ You have no business to think ’. Less trust is placed in memory

¹ If this principle were invariably acted upon, however, no child would learn the multiplication table. But on the other hand it is now taught by a method the reverse of the old one. In order to teach the all-important fact that twice two is four, the teacher dispenses with the cane and the book, and produces instead two oranges and two apples, and begins with the concrete illustration of the dry mathematical fact that $2 \times 2 = 4$.

and more in reason. Children are taught to observe, and put things together for themselves. Reasoned error is preferred to unreasoning correctness."

The Bishop goes on to say :—

"It is clearly our duty to consider how far these methods of teaching are applicable to religious instruction. For as yet we have very imperfectly adopted them. The rule of theological teaching still is, first, store the child's memory, then let his reason work. Supply him with definition . . . leave it to the Holy Spirit by and by to unfold and apply the truth."

Bishop Knox goes on to remark :—

"While the Day School is being modernized, the Church is being fossilized. I am sorry to use the term, for it means more than I want to say ; but it is hard to find any other single word to mark the contrast. Our interest as Churchmen has largely been turned in the direction of the Church of four hundred years ago. Its literature, its methods, its rubrics, and its postures are being exhumed with all-absorbing interest. We can hardly wonder that the world, flushed with new conquests in the realm of scientific discovery, looks with something of impatience—yes, and with something of *contempt*—upon our never-ending excavations of the buried past."

Our ancestors were marvellous men. Something may be said, however, for seeing with our own eyes. We too will eventually be ancestors, let that fact inspire us. But no folly is greater than that of despising the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

But to return to the subject of the Catechism : "that is to say, an instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop". Let us take an illustration from another school subject :—

Suppose that it could be proved that a certain teacher—instead of showing the children how to work out the simple addition sums which are set in a certain ancestral Arithmetic book—had torn out the answers at the end of the venerable book, and had compelled the pupil to swallow, in the shape of pills, page after page of the answers ; what then ? Would that prove that the said arithmetic book was (in itself) useless ? Would it not rather demonstrate that the teacher had imparted the information in the wrong way ?

The fact that a thing has been abused, does not in itself prove that it ought not to be used.

Or if a "teacher" taught the children the answers (in the book) off by heart, before they were set to work out the sums, he would be guilty of an almost equal absurdity, but the fault would be his, not the book's.

To begin with the answers, instead of with the sums, is to commence at the wrong end. Nature—God—teaches in the reverse order. The result of supplying the answers prematurely is to defeat the object of the arithmetic “lesson”, and to misuse the book. But the answers have their use. They must be known BY THE TEACHER. It is the teacher, not the book, which deserves the blame if the answers are abused.

The same mistake is made in teaching the Catechism, if the answers are taught before the children understand the questions. If the answer is hammered into the memory before the riddle is understood, no useful purpose is served. The fault in such cases is in the teaching—not in the subject. Jesus Christ taught by Parable, Question, Riddle, Paradox, but He did not teach the answer first. The result of “teaching” the answers of the Catechism as if they were passwords to heaven, is that when questioned, the child often supplies the wrong answer, because he does not see any intelligible connection between the question and the reply. If he is sufficiently industrious, and if his “teacher” is sufficiently persistent, the child may in six years learn, and know, all the answers, but he will not connect them with the right questions. Nor will he know the ideas which the words of the answers ought to convey,

because the answers are not complete sentences. In the Day School, if a child is asked, "What is an island?" He is taught to begin his reply thus:—"An island is——" The answer is a complete sentence.

Those of us who, like myself, know what the results of "Religious Education" really are, feel no surprise when we receive replies such as the following:—

(1) Question: "What is your name?"

Answer: "N or M".

(Cultured adult Churchmen have said to me, "I have always wondered why one's name is said to be "N or M".)

(2) Question: "Who gave you this name?"

Answer: "Two only as generally necessary to salvation."

(3) Question: "What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then¹ for you?"

Answer: "My Godfathers and my Godmothers in my baptism, wherein I was made", etc.

Question: "Rehearse the articles of thy belief."

Answer: "Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will", etc.

One is reminded of the Questions and Answers in the French books of our childhood: "Is your father well?" "No, but my aunt has a garden."

¹ "Then" is somewhat vague.

It is not only children who make these little mistakes. The parents also give the correct answer in the wrong place, and for the same reason. Thus e.g. in the Baptismal service:—

Clergyman: "Wilt thou then obediently keep
God's holy will and command-
ments, and walk in the same all
the days of your life?"

Answer: "I renounce them all."

The man who gave this reply did so with the ring of deep determination in his voice; he was determined not to be outdone in the answering by his mother-in-law. But he brought out the correct response at the wrong time. The man meant well enough, he seemed to be very much in earnest.

A Nonconformist writes as follows for Free Churchmen in his excellent book on Sunday School teaching:—

"What is an 'absurdity'? The root idea of that word is *ab* and *surdus*—from a deaf man; such responses as would come from a man who could not hear your remarks, but who wanted it to appear that he did. All of us have had, or have heard, 'absurd' conversions of this sort. You meet a man on a country road, and saying, 'Good day' to him, you ask, 'How far is it to Wilton, please?' He nods back a good day, with the 'absurd' response—for he is a deaf

man—"Well no; I haven't got any Stilton cheese, but I've been making some good Young Americas". That man understood your question quite as well as many a scholar in the Sunday School understands his teacher's ordinary language; and if there were more outspoken answering in our Sunday School classes, there would be more of these absurdities apparent to all."¹

The Catechism is not the only subject that is badly taught. Nor is it only amateurs who are bad teachers. We have known instances of boys, at a great public school, learning propositions of Euclid "*off by heart*". The result was that when the master accidentally transposed the letters of the figure which he was drawing on the blackboard, and then set the boys to work out the proposition from his figure, they (not having noticed the transposition of the letters) repeated the proposition using the letters given in the book. Such a fiasco as this reflects no discredit upon Euclid, nor upon the particular proposition, but only upon the so-called "teacher" of it.

Similarly, if it be said (by the enemies of our Catechism) that children when they wake up in the night, terrified by nightmare, fall upon their knees, and earnestly repeat (by way of prayer) "N or M";

¹ "Teaching and Teachers."

"N or M"; "N or M"; that is no proof that the Catechism commences wrongly; it merely demonstrates the obvious fact that the child has been wrongly taught. If it could be proved (by those who hate our Catechism) that children have been known, night after night when they go to bed, to chalk up the magic formula "N or M" on their bedroom doors, in order to keep off bogies; what then? Such an action on their part would bring discredit upon the teacher (of the Catechism). What the child learns from a teacher, the latter must have taught, either intentionally or unintentionally. See Chapter XXVIII. in "The Training of the Twig".

Canon Wilson, of Worcester, writes :—

"I have often quoted, and will quote again, a profound saying of Confucius, on the use of words and dogmas in teaching religion. 'Fishermen,' he tells us, 'use baskets to catch fish; when they have got the fish they forget the baskets. Teachers use words to convey ideas; when they have got the ideas they forget the words. May it be mine to converse with men who have forgotten the words.'

"The principle is this. All spiritual truth has to be conveyed in imperfect phrases, words, parables, and dogmas. It is a necessity in teaching—you cannot emancipate yourself from words. Teachers use words to convey ideas; the ideas cannot be otherwise

conveyed. But the very object of using the words ought to be so to convey ideas that at last men may forget the words.

"Perhaps, the greatest aid to faith which this generation possesses, and which the last generation did not possess, is a more intelligent view of the nature of dogma in religion."¹

¹ Article on "Theology and Modern Thought" in "Problems of Religion and Science", p. 115.

TEACHERS' MEETINGS

THE advantages of regular and frequent teachers' meetings may be considered under three heads :—

- (A) From the teachers' point of view.
- (B) From the clergyman's point of view.
- (C) From the point of view of the school as a unit.

(A) There is always inspiration in numbers, especially when they meet for a mutual purpose. Every crowd is charged with a special magnetism. The solitary worker easily loses heart ; he broods over his discouragements, and is apt to underestimate his achievements. The band of fellow-workers (inspired by a common aim, and confronted by the same difficulties) encourage one another by the mere fact of associated effort. We believe in the Communion of Saints. It is part of our creed. It was not without adequate cause that Jesus Christ united individual Christians into a church. It was not without reason that He encouraged comradeship and united effort.

Sunday School teachers should act in concert. Being many members of one body, they should meet as a body, and regard themselves as a united band of fellow-labourers working together for a common end. Therefore they should frequently attend teachers' meetings.

Another advantage of co-operation is the pooling of the knowledge and experience of all, for the benefit of each. For instance, as regards :—

- (a) The science and art of teaching. Each may learn something from the others.
- (b) The subject to be taught. This should be looked at from all sides.
- (c) The management and influencing of children. The sum total of the experience of all should help each individual teacher.
- (d) The application of each lesson to the multitudinous needs of childhood. It is very suggestive, and helpful, to hear how others would apply the same moral.
- (e) The division of labour. Each teacher can specialise in one department of the subject, e.g. one can make a speciality of illustrations ; another can come prepared with parallel passages : a third will be the authority upon the subject of ancient manners and customs, etc. etc. This is the age of the specialist, and of the division of labour.

(f) Together they can discuss difficulties, suggest improvements, give vent to their enthusiasm, and thus benefit mutually. Every teacher who expects to take an active part will attend the meeting. Those who expect nothing of the kind are apt to leave their share of listening to others.

(B) From the clergyman's point of view, there is very much to be said for teachers' meetings, because it would be impossible for him to adequately instruct each teacher separately. He would not have time. And even if he could instruct each teacher separately, both he and the teachers would lose the inspiration of numbers. Then again, if one can count upon an audience, one can invite good men to give model lessons, etc., but not otherwise. The clergyman feels that it is worth while to take pains with well-attended teachers' meetings, because what he imparts (1) to the teachers, is passed on to (2) the children, and then (3) reaches the parents, and (4) from them passes on to others; many of whom are "lost to the Church". The weekly gathering of teachers is the centre, from which the leaven spreads to the outmost circumference of the parish.

(C) From the point of view of the school as a whole (i.e. as a unit), there is everything to be said for weekly meetings of the teachers of the several

classes. For instance, by means of such meetings, it is possible to insure concerted action on the part of the individual teachers. Without weekly teachers' meetings each class in the school must inevitably be (to some extent) a law unto itself, and an independent unit. The result of such disjointed efforts is confusion and muddle. By means of weekly assemblies of the teachers and superintendents, unity and harmony are secured with regard to:—

- (1) Doctrine taught.
- (2) The general aim, and ideal, kept in view by the school as a whole.
- (3) Equal treatment for every class in the school—the marking, rewarding, punishing, etc. in each of the several classes, must be the same.
- (4) The keeping down of the general clamour, etc. in Sunday School, by impressing upon the teachers as a whole that the success of each benefits all, and vice versa.

But it may be asked: Will the teachers attend the meetings? The answer to this question is very variously given, but the correct reply is unquestionably as follows: Whether the teachers attend meetings, or not, depends upon the meetings (as well as upon the teachers). Let us look at the subject in the concrete, rather than in the abstract. The question is, then, will they attend the first meeting? Obviously the reply

is that they will do so if some one convinces them that it will be worth while to attend. Will they attend the second meeting? Well, that will depend upon their estimate of, and their experiences at, the first gathering. Similarly, they will put in an appearance at the third, if they enjoyed the second, and benefited by it. The same applies to every succeeding meeting of the series; the teachers will attend just so long as they prefer attendance to absence. No doubt much depends upon the teachers, but it must not be forgotten that something also depends upon the nature of the meetings. Gatherings of all kinds have this characteristic in common, that those which are worth attending are attended. Those that are not worth attending, do not attract a very large attendance: common sense, and our knowledge of human nature, ought to persuade us of this. I must confess that I myself act upon this principle when I am invited to a meeting. I am not ashamed to say that if any kind of meeting bores me, and does me no good, I do not attend it (unless I am asked to take the chair).

This brings me to a point which is sometimes overlooked, viz. that in order to make a meeting a success the man who conducts it must know his business. The art of conducting a meeting is not to be confounded with the art of preaching; nor with the art

UNION EDUCATION

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Next day he asked: "The answer to this question is unquestionably wrong! The correct reply is unquestionably teachers attend meetings, or

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TEACHERS' MEETINGS

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The same principle applies to the churches. If a church is not worth attending, it will not attract a very large attendance. I am not ashamed to say that if any kind of meeting is proposed, and does not seem good, I do not attend. If I am asked to attend, I will go, but I will not stay.

of lecturing. A meeting of teachers is not the same thing as a Sunday congregation; nor as an extension-lecturer's audience. The fact that some clergymen have not grasped this distinction accounts for the poor attendance at many meetings. The art of listening well is not universally displayed by the clergy; and it is unwise on their part to assume that Sunday School teachers invariably possess it. In order to successfully conduct a meeting of any kind, one must be a good listener, rather than a fluent speaker "inebriated by the exuberance of one's own verbosity". Every teacher should be encouraged to take an active part in the meetings. The conductor of a meeting must, therefore, be a good chairman. What is meant by being a good chairman?

There was a certain town committee consisting almost exclusively of most aggressive and self-assertive men. Every member was exceedingly anxious to see his speeches recorded in the various local papers, all of which sent melancholy-looking reporters to the meetings. The chairman was not a good one, but his wife very much enjoyed reading in the local press about the "vote of thanks to Mr. —, who was in the chair". On this committee was a young curate, who did not aspire to have his remarks printed in the local papers. He had a very different reason for attending the meetings: he was very

anxious indeed that the committee should do certain things which he regarded as important. Unfortunately, the meetings were, for various reasons, invariably hostile to any suggestions from the parson, not because of the nature of his suggestions, but because they came from the parson.¹ The latter, however, was a *good chairman*, even when he was not in the chair. In other words, he always takes care to go to such meetings with a very much greater knowledge of the business in hand, than that possessed by any other member of the committee. He also invariably knows (1) exactly what he wishes, and what he does not want; (2) how to express his ideas in the briefest and most pointed manner; (3) why he wishes what he does; (4) how best to make his ideas appeal to the members of the committee; and last, but not least, (5) he knows how to keep silent.

When the meeting commences, various speakers talk; but they are all obviously feeling their way. They speak to clear their minds. Evidently they have not thought the matter out beforehand. The curate, who is deeply interested, listens intently, but exercises great self-control. At the correct moment, however, he humbly whispers his comments to those

¹ Perhaps the meeting felt that he had his say every Sunday from the pulpit, and that at these meetings other people ought to have a chance of speaking.

who are yearning to say something, but have no ideas to express. The members of the committee (with hungry eyes directed towards the reporter's table) consider that the parson's ideas ought not be wasted. If he is too shy to utter them, there are others present who do not suffer from any such disability. The latter therefore take up the curate's ideas one by one, and give them the utmost prominence possible. In this way (by suggestions borrowed from the parson) digressions are nipped in the bud ; the discussions are kept within certain pre-arranged grooves ; suggestions are made in the correct order ; and they move in the desired direction ; and, in fact, one after another of the curate's ideas are taken up by some one else, proposed and seconded, discussed and carried, without having appeared to originate where they have done, viz. in the brain of the parson. When the meeting is over every one is very pleased : the curate because he has done what he came to do ; the speakers because they have received all the credit, and because their remarks have been duly reported in the papers ; the chairman because the meeting was a success ; and the chairman's wife because the usual vote of thanks was not forgotten. In a word, the meeting was a complete success.

Of course, if the curate had been in the chair, he would have acted differently, especially if the meeting

was a friendly one. He would, however, in any case have done as little of the talking as possible.

In order to be a good chairman a man needs a combination of qualities, amongst which many may be mentioned tact, knowledge of human nature, the gift of judicious silence, the knack of eliciting remarks, firmness in checking digressions, *the art of effacing oneself for the sake of the cause*, etc. etc. One also needs experience ; and knowledge of the business "before the house". One must know exactly what is to the point ; and *what is not*. One must be a great economiser of time. Of course, a knowledge of those who form the committee is essential. If the meeting is a friendly one the chairman is tempted to take too prominent a part.

I am Sir Oracle,

And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!¹

This is a mistake analogous to that made by the teacher who talks at his pupils instead of questioning them. The great thing is to set others to work ; not to do it all oneself. It is easy to be selfish, and to enjoy oneself, and to follow the line of least resistance. In other words, it is only too easy to turn a meeting into an audience ; and audiences are apt to get bored—speakers never are. Therefore, as I have said, artistically conducting a meeting is not by any means

¹ " Merchant of Venice," Act I, Scene 1.

the same thing as lecturing ; nor is it to be confounded with preaching. Of course it is easier to do either of the latter, especially if one is used to it ; but it is a one-sided exercise, appreciated for the most part by one individual—the speaker.

It must not be supposed that the man who talks most, is the one who instructs most; on the contrary, teaching is a dual process, and includes considerable activity on the part of the learner. He learns much more by the effort he makes to speak, than he does by endeavouring to appear interested. It is what we say, not what others say to us, that we remember of any conversation. It is in the effort to say something, not in the attempt to listen to something, that the intelligence grows. In order to teach, one must know how to call forth that activity, on the part of the pupils, which results in learning. Mere listening is too passive, too dull, too tiring, and too undignified to produce the desired result.

On the other hand, the man who conducts a teachers' meeting ought to have a very great deal of information which he intends to impart somehow ; and if he cannot communicate it in any other way, he must reluctantly adopt the lecturing, or preaching method. A little thought will, however, often result in the discovery of an alternative. For instance: I know of a Sunday School in a poor district, where all

the teachers are poor, yet all of them have bought, and *studied*, a little manual on Sunday School teaching. They carefully read over, at home, some pre-arranged chapter—let us say on the subject of questioning; they then discuss it at the next meeting.¹ That is better than hearing a long lecture from their chairman upon the subject. It is better in many ways; e.g. (a) it is more interesting—for the *teachers* (the interest taken by the teachers is the measure of their attendance at the meetings); (b) they learn more about the art of questioning; (c) it renders the occasional lecture (which cannot always be avoided) less of a bore than it would be if it occurred more frequently.

There is also a great deal to be said for variety. Every teachers' meeting must inevitably have some features in common with every other such meeting, but the more variety that can be introduced into them the better.

All teachers' meetings should, of course, commence with prayer, although the prayers need not always be the same. The following is Bishop Walsham How's, slightly altered to make it suitable for the occasion:—

O Good Shepherd Who camest to seek and to save
that which was lost, be with us in this our work.

¹ When this method is adopted, if the teachers show any tendency to be long-winded, there must be a time limit fixed, and the chairman must enforce the rule strictly.

Strengthen us in our weakness. Give us greater zeal for Thy glory ; greater love for the souls Thou diedst to save. Let not our sins or infirmities hinder Thy grace. Grant us faithfulness with tenderness, and boldness with meekness. Teach us that we may teach. Comfort us that we may comfort. Bless that which we shall speak in Thy Name. And have mercy upon the teachers and the taught ; for Thine own merits' sake.

If the meeting is held in the evening, and the teachers belong to the poorer classes, they like a hymn. For instance :—

LORD, speak to me, that I may speak

In living echoes of Thy tone ;

As Thou hast sought, so let me seek

Thy erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead

The wandering and the wavering feet ;

O feed me, Lord, that I may feed

Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

O strengthen me, that while I stand

Firm on the Rock, and strong in Thee,

I may stretch out a loving hand

To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach

The precious things thou dost impart ;

And wing my words, that they may reach

The hidden depths of many a heart.

O give Thine own sweet rest to me,

That I may speak with soothing power

A word in season as from Thee,

To weary ones in needful hour.

O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where ;
Until Thy Blessed Face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share. Amen.¹

I read, somewhere, the other day, the following remark :—"Some teachers' meetings open with singing. *One verse is better than two.*" It is possible that some teachers (who feel that time is precious, and that it is exceedingly difficult to get into the hour all that has to be done at the meeting) may endorse the above remark with regard to the duration of the singing. It is open to question, however, whether one verse is better than none at all. Teachers of the working classes are very fond of singing, and derive inspiration from a good hymn.

The following items (and many others like them) can be introduced, from time to time, to add interest to the teachers' meetings :—

1. Business Meeting.
2. Model Lesson to a Class of Infants.

If the Day School mistress is tactfully and courteously approached, and if the hour fixed is a reasonable one, she will probably consent

¹ "Hymns Ancient and Modern," No. 356.

to take the model lesson. Should she decline to do so, however, a fee might be offered to some one else to give the demonstration. It is worth paying for. A discussion by the Sunday School teachers would follow.

3. Address, if possible by a stranger, on "Teaching as an Art".

(An interchange of speakers is good for them, and also for their audiences.)

4. Difficulty Meeting.

5. Discussion on "How to improve our Sunday Schools".

Such discussions must be guided by the Chairman of the meeting.

6. Practice Lesson (Boys' Class) by a Sunday School teacher; followed by a discussion in the nature of friendly criticism and suggestions. The gratitude of the meeting must be expressed to the teacher who has taken the practice lesson, because it is a trying ordeal.

7. Business Meeting.

8. Address on the "Relation between the Psychology of Childhood, and the Art of Teaching".

9. Discussion on "Visiting the Parents".

10. Model Lesson (Girls) by a professional.

11. Address on "The Personal Element in Religious Teaching".

12. Discussion on "How to Keep Order".

13. Demonstration (with a Class of Boys) on "How to Deal with Answers". Taken by the Chairman.
14. Difficulty Meeting. Teachers state their difficulties either orally or through the post. The latter can be anonymous. The problems are then discussed.
15. Address: "How to Illustrate".
16. Discussion on "Useful Literature for Sunday School Teachers".
17. Practice Lesson (Infants) by a Sunday School teacher.
18. Business Meeting.
19. Address on "Simplicity in Teaching".
20. Model Lesson (Boys) by a professional.
21. Discussion on how far Day School methods are possible, and advisable in Sunday School.
22. Address on "How to Make, and Use Notes": with illustrations on the blackboard.
23. Object Lesson, by a professional.
24. Address on "Confirmation".
25. Business Meeting.
26. Practice Lesson (Girls) by a Sunday School teacher.
27. Discussion on "Common Defects in Sunday School Work".
28. Address on "How to Prepare a Lesson".
29. Difficulty Meeting.

30. Demonstration on "How to use Models, and Blackboard". (The Sunday School teacher can use a slate, or piece of card instead of the latter.)
31. Discussion on "How to Teach the Catechism".
32. Business Meeting.
etc. etc. etc. etc.

So far as my experience goes, Day School teachers are not very anxious, as a rule, to take model lessons before an audience of Sunday School teachers, but they good-humouredly consent to do so "just *once*". Whether the supply of model lessons will keep pace with the demand, will depend largely upon how the meeting receives the teacher when he comes. He arrives upon the scene as a perfect stranger to the majority of the audience, and he is one who is not used, perhaps, to gatherings of Church-workers. If he is kept hanging about with a dozen of his pupils, while a crowd of open-mouthed strangers inspect him as though he were a freak, he is apt to get uncomfortable. If he is not thanked for his demonstration, and if he himself is not made to feel at home in the crowd of Sunday School teachers, he will decide not to come again. He will say to himself, "No more unpaid overtime for me". Often enough the Day School teacher is not too well off for friends who are socially his equals (other than fellow-teachers), and if he finds

the Sunday School workers and clergyman really friendly, and grateful, he will probably come again; but not otherwise. A most admirable class are the Day School teachers. I am full of admiration for them; and full of surprise that their very valuable services are not more frequently invited by the Church—out of school hours. If the teacher who gives the model lesson is treated as he should be, he will not only come again, but will very likely find a friend to do the same.¹ Of course, the clergyman can give the lessons himself—if he knows how—but he cannot be so good as a professional teacher; and even if he is, he will not receive so much attention as is given to a certificated teacher. To begin with, he will not be regarded as an equally good authority, even though he may be so in reality; and it is also possible that some of his hearers may have heard his voice so often before, that they have acquired the knack of not lavishing much attention upon what he says. But, however this may be, the wise parish priest (realising that he has more work to do than he has time for) naturally organizes,—i.e. makes use of the work of others. When a man has more to do than he can adequately accomplish single-handed, he must either utilise the talent of others,

¹ If a head-master, he may persuade several of his assistants to give model lessons.

or else give to his parishioners a great deal that is very far removed from being the best available talent of the parish.

The great thing is to introduce as much variety as possible into each teachers' meeting. The subject is large enough to provide plenty of change. There is no necessity to "harp upon one string" week after week. I need not append at this point a long list of suggestions. Having already written a book on the subject of Sunday School teaching, it will be unnecessary to repeat what I wrote in that book. In order, however, to justify the obvious omissions of the present volume, I venture to print some of the items in the Table of Contents of my former work.¹

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Education as a means to a definite end.

Educating mind, conscience, will, and affections.

Who is sufficient for these things?

The teacher as a medium between God and the child.

Truth through Personality.

Influence—how to gain and use it.

Love—the great motive power.

Knowing what to teach.

¹ "The Training of the Twig" (Longmans, Green, and Co.), half rough calf, 3s. net. Cheap edition, 6d. net.

The act of teaching enriches the teacher's mind, and character, in very many ways.

What is teaching?

Telling is not teaching.

The co-operation of pupil and teacher in a dual process.

Restlessness is energy running to waste.

The least common denominator between the ideas of a teacher and pupil.

The relation of attention to interest.

Curiosity, the appetite of the mind—how to raise and use it.

Curiosity must be gradually satisfied.

The Socratic method of inducing thought and effort.

Vagueness in the teacher produces confusion in the pupil.

How and where to begin a lesson.

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Utilising the child's natural instinct of investigation.

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An illustration of how to teach ideas.

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Correct sequence of ideas in the mind of teacher and pupil.

Do not hurry.

Gaps in the teaching are missing links in the pupil's chain of ideas.

The pace at which a *class* can be taught, is no greater than the rate at which its *slowest member* can learn.

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How to teach several children simultaneously.

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Illustrations must be simple, and familiar.

Illustrations must illustrate ; not distract attention to themselves.

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The *necessity* of order and discipline.

How to ensure a *spirit* of order.

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How *not* to govern.

The exercise of authority.

The importance of lesson-preparation.

Spontaneous generation of ideas in the teacher's mind.

Conscious preparation in detail.

How to *make* notes.

How to *use* notes.

I have mentioned business meetings. Let me give an illustration of what I mean by the term. One day when I was very busy in my study, a lady was announced as wishing to see me. She was exceedingly excited, and not very coherent, but I gathered that she was founding a Poetical Society, and wanted me to be chairman of the inaugural meeting. She produced from her pocket a list of regulations written out with pen and ink, which she said were the rules for the new society. I said:—"Then you have already had a meeting?" "Oh no!" was her reply, "I drew up the rules myself." I inquired, "Do you expect any men to join your society, or will it consist wholly of women?" She answered, "Oh, some men have promised to attend the first meeting." I had some difficulty in explaining that if she alone drew up the rules, she alone would keep them. I added, however, that if the meeting was asked to draw up the rules, and if she was the only person

present at the meeting who knew definitely and for certain what was wanted in the way of rules, that fact would very considerably influence the ultimate result (provided, of course, that she made use of her ideas tactfully).

This story will serve to illustrate one method of drawing up Sunday School rules. I mean that they can be drafted, and carried unanimously, by one individual. There is an alternative method, which the story also suggests. Let me deal with the latter.

Assuming that the teachers (who are volunteers) will observe the rules all the better if they have a voice in drawing them up, how should one proceed in the matter? Some such plan as the following might be adopted. To save time and trouble a small sub-committee might be formed to consider the question, and to report to the rest of the teachers at the next general business meeting. The sub-committee, including the parson, having drawn up a list for the approval of the teachers, the suggested rules might be copied by the lady who attends to that department of parish work. She would be asked to take, say, seventy copies on her machine. These would be handed round to the teachers at the business meeting, and the discussion would begin.

Let us say that the following is the rough sketch drawn up by the sub-committee, and placed in the

hands of all the teachers for their consideration before they are asked to vote upon them:—

Suggestions offered by your sub-committee with regard to Rules for Teachers:—(The following regulations will, of course, carry no weight unless they are passed by the teachers, and thus become law.)

Thou that teachest another—teachest thou not thyself?

(Rom. II. 21).

1. To attend regularly and punctually all such Teachers' Meetings as may be decided upon by the Superintendents and teachers.¹
2. If unable to attend, notice to be sent to the Vicar. If he fails to receive such notice, he shall assume that the teacher is ill, and has adopted that method of implying that he is in need of a pastoral visit.
3. Teachers obliged to be absent on any Sunday shall give notice to the Superintendent as soon as possible, or shall provide a substitute.
4. Teachers absenting themselves from Sunday School without notice, and not having provided a substitute, shall be understood to be ill, and the Superintendent will call during the following week (or find a substitute who

¹ It is necessary to have two meetings a week in order that those who cannot attend the one will be able to join the other. The ideal is to have these two meetings weekly, but it may not be wise to mention the fact until the teachers have learned to appreciate these gatherings.

2. Marks are given for punctual attendance, for saying the appointed lessons, which are to be learnt at home, and for good conduct. The annual rewards given about Christmas are in proportion to the marks earned. No scholar can receive a prize unless he has obtained two-thirds of the marks. The prize may, however, be forfeited by continued bad conduct.
3. The scholars are expected to bring their own Prayer Books and hymn-books. Those who do not bring the latter lose one mark each time. Bibles are provided in school.¹
4. The scholars on entering school are to go at once quietly to their own classes, and are not to leave them without their teacher's permission.
5. Any scholar eating fruit, sweets, etc. loses one of the two conduct marks; and if his behaviour is very bad he receives a nought.
6. In order to obtain admission to the summer treat, scholars must have been present two-thirds of the times the school has been opened, between January 1st and June 30th. Those who are on the books as morning (or afternoon) scholars must have been present two-thirds of the Sunday mornings (or afternoons) during the same time. No one to be

¹ Sometimes this is impossible, and by some is not considered advisable.

considered a morning (or afternoon) scholar only, except for some special reason approved by the Superintendent. No one will be admitted to the treat whose name was not on the register before May 1st, or who has received three noughts.

It may be said that if the pace is forced for the children, they will leave the school ; and that if strict rules are drawn up for the teachers, they will resign.

Neither of these fears is justified. It is not a fact that if school rules are enforced the children leave ; nor that if the clergyman is enthusiastic, the teachers leave him single-handed. As a matter of fact the result is the exact opposite. In those Sunday Schools where little or nothing is expected of the teachers, they get bored, and soon leave. And their classes have usually anticipated their departure. Where the ideal is a high one, and the leader of the school is an enthusiast, the teachers discover that teaching is very interesting. Their pupils simultaneously begin to appreciate Sunday School. It is a very great mistake to have a low ideal for those whom one would influence, on the ground that it is easy to expect too much of them. The fact is that people always endeavour to rise to one's estimate of them, and they respond to a high ideal much more readily than to a low one. There is much more heroism and self-sacrifice in

human nature than pessimists suppose. That is a mean and foolish proverb which says, "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he will not be disappointed". Those who expect most of their fellows are the ones who are least disappointed in them.

At the same time *some* teachers will undoubtedly leave the school rather than entertain a noble ideal of their work. What then? Others will come forward to take their place, just because the work is no child's play; and those who previously were but indifferent teachers will rapidly become worth twice as much as they were before. Therefore (at the worst) they could teach the few remaining pupils of the classes left vacant by the deserters (as well as their own classes).

Sunday School teachers resemble hen's eggs in one respect, viz. that one good one is worth more than any number of bad ones. One good teacher can successfully teach a whole roomful of children—especially if assisted by one or two members of the Teachers' Training Class. The latter can keep order, mark the books, etc. The value of all religious work is to be measured, not by its quantity, but by its quality. It is the latter rather than the former which is deficient in our Sunday Schools. Then, again, the quantity cannot very well be greatly increased, but the quality can be indefinitely im-

proved. Moreover, it is quite possible—and even common—for a score of Sunday School “teachers” to teach practically nothing in a twelvemonth; but it is impossible for one good teacher to do otherwise than teach a great deal in one hour. It is not the volume of sound, but the amount of learning, which makes the difference. Then, again, one teacher who is very much in earnest is worth vastly more, *as an inspiring agent*, than a couple of score who are nothing of the kind. One of the chief difficulties in Sunday School work, is getting rid of those teachers whose presence is worse than useless. The latter not only do no good in their own class, but (by the uproar they allow) interfere with the work of half a dozen neighbouring classes. By all means let the loafers desert, because there is no room in a well-worked Sunday School for any but the workers. In an article on “The Discouraged Teacher”, I came across the following advice:—“If the discouraged teacher does not attend the teachers’ meeting, discourage him a little more.” All teachers cannot be either great theologians, or skilled educationalists, but all can be very much in earnest.

The prime essential is not so much what each teacher says in class, as what each teacher is in his heart of hearts. Example is better than precept; influence than dogmatics. The general atmosphere

outweighs in importance any preaching. In short, it is the teacher's life which is of supreme value. Communion with God is more effective than being able to accurately repeat off by heart the whole Thirty-nine Articles and the Athanasian Creed. In a word, saintliness is catching, but it cannot always be taught by rule of thumb. Bishop Creighton said :—

“ What the children need to inherit is not our knowledge, but our spirit. You must not aim in the first place at giving systematic instruction, but at imparting an ideal impulse. The heart and not the head is your especial province. It is the character, not the understanding, which you are trying to reach. You have no external tests (examinations) which you are bound to satisfy; you are not the slave of any system.”¹

Bishop Knox remarks :—

“ Teachers worried with dread of impending diocesan inspections, have with enormous pains, pigeon-holed the brains of their children. And then, when the inspector is gone, the facts are not there. Moreover, room must be made for next year's documents in the mental pigeon-holes, so that the mechanical process of teaching is always disappointing in itself.”²

¹ “ Thoughts on Education.”

² Introduction to “ Thoughts on Education ”.

Bishop Creighton went so far as to say :—

“ If I were to choose between two systems of education, in one of which purely secular teaching was to be given by a religious man, and in the other religious teaching by a secular man, I have no hesitation in saying which system I would choose in the interests of religion as well as of education. I would rather have the religious-minded teacher though the subjects he taught were secular, because I know that the devotion of his heart would penetrate his work.”

He said this apropos of Day School teaching, but it is still more true of the instruction given on Sunday, which is supposed to add the “ Spiritual meaning ” to the “ earthly story”, which has been taught during the week.

But although the religious atmosphere is all important in Spiritual work, it is no more sufficient for the building up of Christian character, than is the sea breeze—by itself—sufficient to build up the child's physical structure. The soul needs something more substantial than a spiritual atmosphere. In short it needs “ its portion of meat in due season”, commencing with “ milk for babes”. Or to drop the metaphor :—Education consists, amongst other things, of definite instruction ; and the value of any instruction is to be measured by the extent to which the pupil is

instructed—i.e. receives information. It is not all the instruction offered, that is received. Therefore teaching is not to be estimated by the amount of instruction given, but by the amount absorbed ; not by the amount of talking, but by the amount of learning. To educate is to take one idea (not word) at a time, from one's own soul, and implant it *so that it will grow* in the soul of the pupil. To sum up, there are certain very distinct things which are often confused together ; e.g. words, and ideas ; the letter, and the spirit ; intellectual knowledge about God, and personal knowledge of Him ; an acquaintance with theology, and a spirit of devotion ; knowledge of what is right and wrong, and a love of goodness, coupled with a determination to act rightly.

CHILDREN'S PRAYERS

SOMETIMES it suddenly occurs to a teacher that it would be well to find out whether his pupils ever say any private prayers, and if so what is the nature of their devotions. Often, however, this subject is not broached by the teacher. Either he takes too much for granted, and supposes that the children can and do pray at home, and that no doubt the mothers deal with the subject, or else he feels shy about inquiring into so private and personal a matter. Children are, of course, somewhat reticent until they know and love their teacher. On the other hand, however, they believe in plain speaking, and they respect a religious teacher who is practical, direct, and personal, and who deals, not in generalities and abstractions, but in concrete and practical applications of Christianity. It is all very well to talk about prayer in the abstract, but it is also necessary to deal with the subject in the concrete. One of the many advantages of having teachers' meetings is that such a subject (as the children's private prayers)

can be brought forcibly before all the teachers simultaneously. They can be asked whether they are acquainted with their pupils' devotional habits, and if so what information they have gathered on the subject. Does the average parent teach the child how to pray, and what to pray for? Does the teacher keep himself informed as to his pupils' private devotions, with the object of gradually developing the devotional life of the children? The answers to such questions will bring before the notice of the teachers the actual state of affairs. As a result suggestions will be made with regard to practical methods of dealing with this most important side of the teacher's work. It will become evident to all, that something ought to be done—and done at once—to improve the state of things. It remains to be seen how the problem should be dealt with.

When the Apostles went to their Master and said: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples", our Lord's response was to give them a model prayer. "After this manner pray ye". Similarly when teaching children how to pray, one should give them illustrations—examples—of what one means. They all know the Lord's Prayer, but they should also know other prayers, which would form the nucleus of their morning and evening devotions. In addition to being a nucleus these prayers would serve as models—

object-lessons—to guide them in their extempore devotions.

The question arises, should each teacher compose prayers for her class? Or would it not be better for clergy, superintendents, and teachers to confer together with the object of drawing up a few devotions which could be printed? If the latter method is adopted, every teacher should endeavour to contribute suggestions; the effort will teach them much, and perhaps have other results. Some could e.g. bring to the meeting samples of the many prayer-cards which are in print. These would be compared, and as a result, a new card drawn up embodying the best ideas that could be elicited. When this has been done the teachers feel that the result expresses the best devotional thoughts of all, and they know that it represents the wishes of the teaching staff, as a body. Such mutual co-operation results in esprit de corps; and an increase of interest in the result, because it is the outcome of mutual effort. While the prayer-card is in process of being drawn up, and printed, the importance of morning and evening prayer would be enforced as the subject of the Sunday's lesson. Then the children would be asked to repeat to the teacher, the prayer, or prayers, which they usually say. Possibly they will only supply the desired information privately, when alone with their

teacher, or perhaps they will write down their prayer, and hand it in to the teacher privately. But whatever method the teacher may adopt, he ought to find out pretty definitely what are the devotional habits of his pupils, and what ideas they have on the subject of private prayer. When this has been done it will become obvious that the children need assistance, and require teaching of a definite and practical nature. I myself find it well to issue to each child a prayer-card,¹ made so that it can be hung up on a nail. This prevents it from being lost, and keeps it from being worn out and soiled. I give the contents of the card by way of suggestion only, not of course for imitation. No doubt many improvements will suggest themselves to the reader. On the one side is printed the devotions, and on the obverse side a few simple instructions, thus :

PRIVATE PRAYERS

MORNING

Lord, teach me to pray.

O God, my Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Thy loving care of me during the night. Keep me to-day from thinking or saying, or doing, anything that is wrong. Make me obedient, truthful, and loving. Help me to grow more like my Saviour every day, and bless me and keep me, Thy dear child, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Our Father which art in heaven, etc.

¹ Not paper, but stout cardboard.

O God, bless my dear father and mother, and all my relations and friends. Bless our Clergy and Teachers, and make me try to remember all they teach, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Then tell God anything that you want to say to Him, for He is listening.

EVENING

Lord, teach me to pray.

O Blessed Jesus, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for whatever I have done wrong to-day. Help me to be truly sorry and to try hard to do better to-morrow.

I thank Thee, O my Heavenly Father, for all the blessings of the day that is past. I thank Thee for life and health, for relations and friends, for food and clothing, and for everything I have. Watch over me, Good Lord, throughout the night, and keep me safe as Thy dear child for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Our Father which art in heaven, etc.

Then speak to God in your own words; He will understand.

On the back of the card is printed :—

HELPS TO DAILY PRAYERS

Before you say your morning prayers, try to remember what sins you confessed to God the night before, and ask God to help you to avoid doing the same wrong things during the day that is beginning.

Before you say your prayers at night, ask yourself these questions :—

"Did I say my prayers this morning properly?"

"Did I feel that it was to God I was speaking?"

"Have I been quite truthful and honest to-day?"

"Have I tried to please God and obey my parents and teachers?"

When you pray, kneel down and try to feel that you are in God's presence. Remember that He can do all things, and that although He is so great, yet He loves you and is your Father. Be sure that if what you pray for is right and good, God will give you what you ask for. But God knows better than you do what you need, and what will be good for you. When you make up prayers for yourself, say at the end of them, "Nevertheless not as I wish, but as Thou wilt".

Whenever you feel that you have done wrong, do not wait until prayer-time comes, but say at once, "O my God, I am so sorry that I have sinned against Thee" (here tell God what you have done that was wrong). "I am very sorry, because Thou art so good and kind, and sin displeases Thee so much. Help me by Thy Grace not to do wrong again, for Jesus Christ's sake."

Read a part of the Gospels every day, and read straight on day after day. Don't open the Bible just anywhere.

The children like to have these cards, and they hang them up in their bedrooms. So far so good. If, however, they do not use them, the purpose for which they have been given will, of course, be defeated. The scholars must be taught to use them regularly, and they should be asked at intervals whether they are doing so.

As the children grow older, they should learn to offer up fuller devotions. Infants, and those who

are "in their teens", should not—as they frequently do—say identically the same prayers. I am indebted for permission to borrow the following from a leaflet printed and sold by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge :—

TO BE USED MORNING AND EVENING BY CANDIDATES
FOR CONFIRMATION.

O Heavenly Father, I draw near to Thee by Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Let me come in the spirit of a child. Make me thankful, humble, and true. Teach me the meaning of life, show me the hope of glory, and enable me to love Thee. May I be diligent to search Thy word, and to continue in prayer, and to think of my baptismal vows. Reveal to me my secret faults, and let them not have dominion over me. Help me to live for the good of others, and above all things to please Thee. Let the day of my Confirmation be a new starting-point in my life. When I come, fill me, and all who come with me, with Thy Holy Spirit, and grant that being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, we may finally reach the land of everlasting life, there to reign with Thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

With regard to the distribution of these and other cards, the proper time for handing them round is after school. If they are given out during the lesson hour they distract attention from the lesson, and the children play with them instead of listening to their teachers.

The children should be taught to pray when they enter church, and when they are about to leave, after service. We had the following printed, and stuck inside every child's hymn-book, or Prayer Book :—

PRAYER BEFORE SERVICE.

O Heavenly Father, I am now in Thy House. Keep my mind free from wandering thoughts. Help me to remember that it is to Thee that I am to speak in prayer and praise. Grant me what I ask, for Jesus Christ's sake.

AFTER SERVICE.

Grant, O God, that what I have said and sung with my lips I may believe in my heart, and what I believe in my heart, I may practise in my life, for Jesus Christ's sake.

These should be printed on adhesive paper, and should be stuck into the children's books by the teachers.

The excitement of the march to church, and again the (pleasurable) anticipation of leaving the sacred edifice, are apt to make the children forget to use these prayers. Those of them who do endeavour to say their devotions, are distracted by those who are otherwise engaged. Then again, the entrance and exodus of the children takes time, consequently those who are in their seats are distracted by those who are on the march. For these and other reasons it is well, when all are in their places, to call for

silence, and to tell all the children to kneel simultaneously and to say the prayer, either silently or aloud. The adoption of this plan overcomes any feeling of shyness on the part of those boys who are not used to kneel in public except *en masse*.

As a rule perhaps one does not make sufficient use of the printer's art. Children have a great respect for printed matter. It carries more weight with them than the "spoken word". Parents also reverence print, and especially all official-looking documents.

ORGANIZATION

CIVILIZATION implies organization, and organization necessitates the use of the printing press. Let us take a few illustrations.

For instance, quarterly reports impress both parents and children very considerably. I have known them to have them framed, and hung up upon the wall. If the form of these reports is drawn up by the teachers, they will be much more careful in filling them up than if they had no voice in the production of them. The form on the opposite page would perhaps serve the purpose of introducing a discussion on the subject.

These should be printed on good card (not paper) and filled up by the teacher. The reports ought to be taken round by the teacher and delivered to the parents in person. The opportunity can be seized to enlist the sympathies of the mothers in the work of the Sunday School. The fathers are usually out at work, but one need not despair of having a word with them also, upon the subject.

When visiting the parents, one may (after tactfully

(Name of Sunday School.)

(Where held.)

REPORT.

For the quarter ending.....190...

Name of Scholar.....

.....*Class in the*.....*School.*

Attendance { *Morning*..... } *out of a total of* {
 { *Afternoon*..... }

Early..... *Late*.....

Lessons

Conduct

Teacher

Superintendent

School opens at (9.50 a.m. and 3 p.m.).

Parents are requested to do all in their power to secure
regular and punctual attendance of their children.

speaking to them about their responsibilities) hand them a copy of the "Parents' Help Card" (No. 2197) issued by the S.P.C.K.¹ Below will be found a mutilated copy of it. I give the back first, because it seems to me to be the better side, and because it introduces the subject-matter printed on the other face. (It would be possible to improve upon this card; for instance, it could be made with an eyelet-hole, to enable the parent to hang it up.)

A WORD TO PARENTS.

The Parents' Help Card has been designed by a Society for the help of friendless girls.

In trying to trace to their source the causes of so many young girls falling, and so many being on the very edge of the precipice of evil, from which it is so hard to rescue them when they have fallen, this Society finds one of these causes, and a very common one, to be the want of good home influences and training in early childhood (and this not only in the case of orphans and the children of vicious parents), without which the teaching at school, however good, loses very much of its effect.

It is, perhaps, natural that parents who have to work hard for their children's support, should trust their education to others, and feel that they are doing their part in sending them to the Day School and Sunday School.

There is much, however, which the school teacher cannot do—which no one but the parents can—and it is the wish of the compilers of the "Parents' Help Card" to give a little simple help to such Fathers and Mothers as

¹ I am indebted to the S.P.C.K. for their kind permission to make use of their card.

will accept it, in laying the real foundation-stones of their children's training in the paths of Christian faith and purity.

An old proverb says, "What is learnt in the cradle lasts to the grave", and another, "Those who rock the cradles rule the world".

Parents who take this matter seriously to heart will be likely to improve much upon the few and simple rules suggested, and will add much heartfelt prayer to the short collect on the card; but the object of the compilers will be attained if, in the words of the motto, some Fathers and Mothers are led to see how entirely "this matter belongeth unto" them.

It may be added that it is not without thought that to both Parents, and not Mothers only, the "Help Card" is offered. Though on the Mother must fall the largest share of the home training of the child, it would be impossible to exaggerate the effect on both boys and girls of the Father showing that he feels that "this matter belongeth" also to him, and is no less deeply interesting to him than to the Mother.

On the reverse side is printed :—

Motto.

"Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it" (Ezra x. 4).

DUTIES TOWARDS THE CHILDREN.

- I. To pray for them constantly.
- II. To see that they say their morning and evening prayers reverently and, when possible, to take them to public worship, instead of sending them alone or with other children.¹

¹ The advantage to children of receiving their earliest training from their parents in both the private and public worship of God is one for which no amount of teaching at school can at all make up.

- III. To try to train them to be obedient, truthful, honest, and pure.
- IV. To make the best possible sleeping arrangements for them, with the object of training both boys and girls in habits of modesty and self-respect.
- V. Never to allow coarse jests, bad words, quarrelling or low talk before them, and never allow sin to be spoken of as a misfortune.
- VI. To try to get them early to bed, and not to allow them, and especially the girls, to be out late in the lanes or streets.
- VII. To be careful to send them to work at houses of good character only.

PARENTS' PRAYERS.

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (St. Matt. XXI. 22).

I.

Almighty God and Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the children whom Thou hast given me; give me also grace to train them in Thy faith, fear, and love, that, as they advance in years they may grow in grace, and may hereafter be found in the number of Thine elect-children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

O Heavenly Father, look down in mercy upon our children. Keep them from all harm, both in soul and in body. Make them obedient and humble, pure and truthful. May they remember Thee in the days of their youth, and at all times bear in mind that Thine eye is upon them. And so may they grow up in Thy fear and love, and increase like the Holy Child Jesus, in wisdom, and in favour with God and man; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I venture to quote from a book called "The American Sunday School", by John H. Vincent (p. 29).¹

"The author some years ago prepared the following leaflet, addressed :—

'To the Parents of our Pupils.

'We, the pastor, superintendent, and teachers of the Sunday School to which your children belong, send you a few words of greeting in the name of the Great Teacher. . . .

'It is exceedingly difficult for us to succeed' (in our work for your children) 'without the help of your parental authority and influence. Your opinions, teachings, and example have immense power with your children. A child will for a long time believe what his father believes, and love what his mother loves, in spite of all that the school, the Church, and the world may teach.

'It is not strange, therefore, that we greatly desire to secure your co-operation in our work, and it is the object of this missive to show you what you may do to aid us. If we seem overzealous in this matter, attribute any excess you may detect to our real, and profound interest in the child, or children coming from your home to our classes.

¹ I am indebted to the Sunday School Union for permission to quote from this book. This unsectarian union is most admirably managed. There is no society of the kind which can compare with it, unless it be the National Society (which is Anglican).

'The following are requests we make :—

'Show as far as you are able, an appreciation of our work. Let the children see that you have faith in the school and its object. A word in our favour may beget in the child a strong faith in us, and this will give force to our teachings.

'If you are not acquainted with the school or with our method, or if from any cause you have doubts concerning us, or even slight prejudices against us, we respectfully ask you not to give expression to such doubts or prejudices before your children. Write to us. Visit and remonstrate with us. In any way you may deem wisest and best let us know your convictions and desires, but do not unnecessarily awaken suspicion or distrust in the minds of your children relative to their religious teachers.

'See that your children feel the claims of the school upon them. If we are doing them good, if we give them knowledge, if our services are worth anything to them, see that they appreciate it. Show them what benefits they are themselves deriving from our instructions, that their regard may not merely be based upon your opinions, but upon an intelligent appreciation of the value of the Sunday School.

'Send them to the Sunday School regularly and punctually. By authority, by argument, or by persuasion secure their presence the year through, and at the proper time, that the order of the school may be promoted.'"

Some teachers call upon the parents very reluctantly, and are very glad of any excuse to do so—some definite object to announce when they arrive at their destination. Then, again, teachers are not always very clear in their minds as to how to make the most of their visit. They know how important the home influence is, but they feel (especially if they are unmarried) that it savours of impertinence to advise parents how to deal with their children. For these and other reasons, there is much to be said for taking a printed message issued by the clergy, superintendents, and teachers, and given to every parent who has children at the school. The parents cannot feel that such a message (issued to all alike) is personal or impertinent; and they cannot take offence at it. Moreover, it will carry more weight than if it had been delivered orally, and in person, by a single teacher to an individual parent. If such leaflets are printed by the ten thousand they are individually very inexpensive, and the teachers when they become really interested in their work will gladly subscribe to a "printing fund". Moreover, when they have paid for anything, they appreciate it, and take care to use it wisely. They themselves, however, should suggest subscribing to such funds as these. They should not be asked to do so by the clergyman. He can, however, suggest to one of the superintendents the

idea of introducing the subject at a teachers' meeting.

A Vicar who is a good organizer, will keep his eye upon the whole parochial machinery simultaneously, and make every department help every other department of the work. For instance, he will issue to his district visitors (and others) printed forms to be filled in by them. These forms will have spaces provided for the insertion of information upon such subjects as the following :—

1. Children who are baptised.
2. Children who are unbaptised.
3. Children who do not attend a Sunday School.
4. Children who have recently come into the parish.
5. Likely candidates for Confirmation.

Thus :—

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[illegible]

The Vicar would have these forms bound up into a book for his own use, and he would issue the forms loose to the Curates, District Visitors, Lay Readers, Sunday School Teachers, Bible-women, Sisters, etc., who would fill them up. When this had been done, the net result would be incorporated into the Vicar's book. A very considerable amount of information would thus be available.

How would he utilise it in forwarding the work of the religious education of children? Well, there are, in the first place, the children who have been recently baptised. The Church is pledged to attend to the religious education of these infants. They ought not to be forgotten. Some capable person would be asked to study the Vicar's book, above mentioned, and to write down upon alternate¹ lines of a new note-book the names and addresses of the newly baptised. Names would also be added from the baptismal register.

Given a complete list of the recently christened, what use would one make of it? What would be the advantage of having a Font-Roll?

Some one must be found who will (1) keep an eye upon the infants; (2) take an obvious interest in their spiritual welfare; (3) become friends with the

¹ Room must be left for corrections, and for new names to be inserted in the proper place, i.e. in the correct order, according to streets.

parents ; and (4) make every effort to persuade them to send the children to the infants' department of the Sunday School as soon as they are old enough. Perhaps several people would jointly undertake this work.

Then there are the children who have not been baptised. For them there should be a Cradle Roll, managed by some one else. It ought to be known what children are unbaptised, and what is being done in the matter. For instance, there is the problem of Sponsors. It is also necessary to explain the nature of baptism to the parents.

Then there are the likely candidates for confirmation—other than those in the Sunday School. These should be known, and each case must be dealt with by some one. A book should be kept containing the names, addresses, etc., of all possible candidates for confirmation.

Then there are the lads and girls who ought to go to a Bible-class, but who do not do so. Every such case should be known and dealt with. One cannot expect the teachers of such classes to call upon any others than their own pupils. If a Bible-class is to be well conducted, recruits must be found by some one else, and pupils for additional classes provided.

Then there are the children who have recently

come into the parish, and have not as yet joined a Sunday School. Some one must look after these.

In fact, without going into any further detail one can easily realise that the Vicar will see very definitely and clearly a great many things which have to be done. He will then have to look out for the right people to do that part of the work which can be done by the laity. And when they have done it he will give *them* the credit for it. He will also teach the various parish workers that they must not be jealous of each other, nor accuse each other of poaching, nor take credit for work which some one else has done. The Vicar will teach these things by example, rather than by precept.

The work done in a parish ought to be very much greater than that which can be performed personally by the clergy, therefore if possible the latter should point out to the laity what may be done by them. I mean that the clergyman should do nothing himself which can be done by some one else, unless he has already completed that part of his work which can only be done by himself, and done it as well as it is possible for him to do it.

If a General, in time of war, were to lie down in the firing-line, and devote his energies to shooting, he would be forgetting his own special duties, and (instead of these) be doing those of a private soldier.

Such Generals do not exist, even in the worst army. The Captain of a battleship does not do his own stoking, nor does he scrub the decks himself. Similarly, the manager of a great business carefully avoids doing work which he can with advantage leave to his clerks. We all realise this. Similarly, the bishop who complains that his work is so extensive that he cannot hope to do half of it adequately, ought not to waste his episcopal time in doing curates' work. Nor should he do what laymen could carry on better than he. In these days of high pressure if one spends time in doing some one else's work, one must inevitably neglect one's own. That is very obvious, but it is not always acted upon. And so, as I have said, a man who knows how to organize will not "bury his talent in a napkin", and try to manage without organization. He will give every one who is willing to work something to do. He will also create willingness in the unwilling. He will keep the interest of all the Church-workers alive by thinking of new, and important work for them to do. There is always plenty of it waiting to be done. The reason why district visitors, lay readers, those who conduct mothers' meetings, and other Church workers generally, get bored, is that their work becomes too monotonous. There is not sufficient interest kept up. New ideas are seldom born, and the old ones become worked out and exhausted, and therefore wearisome.

Take a mothers' meeting, for instance. Too many of them are of the following kind, month after month, year after year, decade after decade :—

An assembly of mothers, with infants in their arms, collect in a very comfortless room, for reasons which do not seem to be very adequate. Some one who is not a mother, and who knows next to nothing about children, but who has very kindly undertaken to conduct the meeting, arrives upon the scene. She has absolutely no intention whatever of teaching the mothers anything. Perfunctory devotions are the first item upon the programme, and these set the lungs of half a dozen or more of the infants at work. Then some child's book is read aloud (for the benefit of the mothers) while the children give vent to their marked disapproval by keeping up a perpetual noise. Eventually tea is produced,¹ and general gossip is simultaneously indulged in, until it is time for the meeting to take part in the concluding devotions.

Now all the mothers present are more or less surprisingly ignorant of most of the things which it is imperative that they should know about the rearing of children. Yet it is the exception—I think I am

¹ A certain mother who had lived in London deplored that in the country Christian privileges were deficient. For instance, in town she had attended five mothers' meetings a week and had tea at all of them; whereas in the country there were only two in the village, and the Anglican one provided no tea.

right in saying that it is the very rare exception—to give them any information whatever with regard to the A B C of the art of being a mother. The best mother in the parish ought to conduct such gatherings, and she should prepare carefully and prayerfully beforehand for each meeting.”¹ Infant mortality amongst the poor is appalling, 55% die before the age of five. This is mostly due to ignorance of a few simple facts which could easily be taught at mothers’ meetings.

Then, again, what better opportunity could one have of speaking tenderly and tactfully about the parent’s responsibility with regard to the spiritual life of her children? It may be said that it is not easy to speak well, when ten or a dozen children are either crying aloud, or “cooing”. This is true, but children do not bawl continuously without a reason. If the cause of the noise is removed, the uproar will cease. The fact is that the infants are bored. Some one ought to amuse them (if possible in another room) while the speaker is addressing the meeting. This is not perhaps an easy matter to arrange, but it is worth attempting. The infants in an average crèche are fairly quiet, all day long, while their mothers are away at work. Why should not each

¹ There are several good books which might be studied with advantage; e.g. “The Child”, by W. B. Drummond (J. M. Dent).

mothers' meeting have its crèche? I mean that some one (or half a dozen people) might attend to look after the children. At some meetings it is the custom of the mothers to give their whole attention to amusing their infants. Mothers cannot under such circumstances attend to anything which may be said to them. In fact, they themselves make a considerable din talking baby language: "Did ums then", etc. The conductor of such a meeting gets tired of the work in time, and gives it up.

The clergyman who is a good organizer will not confine his efforts for the religious education of the children to merely one or two kindred organizations. He will manage the whole of the parochial machinery as a unity, and in such a way that each organization does something to benefit every other one. He will not divide up his efforts into air-tight compartments, so to speak. Nor will he isolate the interests of his fellow-workers. He will regard the work as a whole. For instance, there is the pulpit: he will not wholly divorce the Sunday sermon from the work which is being done in the parish. He will not take it for granted that his congregation takes no interest in parochial work; on the contrary, he will assume just the opposite. He will take every one into his confidence, so that those who are asked to help any department of the work will know at once the exact

nature of that which they are asked to support. It is not desirable that the congregation should hear nothing about what is being done, except when they are asked to subscribe. The reverse order of procedure is the better one. Their interest should be aroused a long time previously, and without any suggestion that one wishes to enlist their sympathies merely for the sake of their cash value. Sermons would gain a great deal in reality, life, interest, power, and, in fact, in all that goes to make a good sermon, if they more frequently dealt with the actual religious life of the parish, instead of with abstractions, or ancient Jewish history. When a stranger comes to preach about some real work, the members of the congregation wake up to the expectation that they will hear something real, and practical, and living, and therefore interesting. If, however, the stranger "preaches a sermon" instead of talking about some real and practical religious work, his audience is disappointed. A little abstract theory goes a long way in a sermon. What we all take an undying interest in is the actual and practical application of theories to real life.

It may be said, by way of objection to the above, that nothing is so wearisome as the local news in the average parish magazine, and that if the same kind of thing was delivered from the pulpit, sermons would be

worse than they now are. But I reply that it is not the subject dealt with in parish magazines that is dull, but the method of dealing with the subject. Some of these parochial journals are very interesting to those who are interested in religion and altruism.

The nature of any magazine, whether secular or religious, depends of course upon the editor.

Some editors of parish magazines are :—

1. Intimately in touch with all the many-sided spiritual life of the parish.
2. They know what is interesting and what is not.
3. They can express what they have to say briefly, and in a bright and interesting manner.
4. They do not think it wicked to be cheerful or humorous.
5. They know how to get good "copy" out of the heads of departments.
6. They do *not* have two or three pages devoted solely to an analysis of coins collected at the Sunday Offertories during the month.
7. They take care that, throughout the parish, there shall be something going on. (One cannot write interesting accounts of what does not take place.)
8. They believe that the value of a parish magazine depends upon how much effort is expended upon—
 - (a) Parish work, and
 - (b) The description of that work.

9. The editor being what he is, the parishioners gradually become interested in their parish, and therefore like to keep themselves informed with regard to what is going on in it. There ought to be some news of the work done in a month. The parishioners themselves take an active part in parish work. Even the chronic invalids have work assigned to them; they belong to the Guild of Intercession. Moreover, they know that their Vicar is sincere when he says that he receives inspiration from them when he calls. From one he learns fortitude, from another faith, from a third charity, from a fourth perseverance, and so on.

The power of the Press is very great, and the good organizer will use it widely for parochial purposes. If one gets some one to go round and persuade people to advertise in the parish magazine, one can afford to give it away on a large scale and yet make a good profit on it.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the Sunday School is an integral part of the parochial machinery. The Sunday School ought not to be a distinct and independent commonwealth, as is the case very often in America. I believe that even in England some of the Nonconformist Sunday Schools are independent of, and even hostile to, both the minister and the congregation.

This would be quite impossible in a well-worked parish, with one strong and capable organizer at the head of it. The fault is on both sides when the Sunday School is isolated. Isolation is often the result of neglect. It is not only Sunday Schools which become isolated from the parochial machinery. Men's Clubs, Lads' Clubs, Girls' Friendly Societies, Church Lads' Brigade, and many other excellent institutions are apt to stand aloof from the parochial organization, when the latter stands aloof from them.

One cannot fail to realise the importance of co-ordinating the various departments of the parochial machinery, which should be worked together as a united whole. Let me illustrate what I mean, commencing with the infants' department of the Sunday School, which is the most neglected, the most important, and the most difficult to manage satisfactorily. The first eight years of life are the most important, and the infants' school is the feeder of the boys' and girls' departments. The latter have to provide lads and lasses for Bible Classes, etc. etc., and, in any case, the children will eventually leave¹ the Sunday School. Consequently, the losses sustained by the top of the school must be made good by the influx of babies from the infants' department. The

¹ In the North, three generations of pupils sit side by side in Sunday School, but in London e.g. we have not yet achieved such a desirable result.

whole chain of interlinked classes from the baby-class to the men's club depend upon the infants' department for their supply of pupils. The question, consequently, arises, How is one to fill the baby school? Let us consider two or three important factors.

(1) If the Superintendent is one of the Day School mistresses (from the infants' department) she will, of course, be in a position to tap a very large source of supply. Five days a week she is winning love, confidence, respect, and obedience. She knows—intimately—the children who are compelled, by the School Attendance Officer, to assemble during the week. Of course, the oldest of parochial old maids are the greatest lovers of infants, and, therefore, in the kindness of their dear old hearts, they volunteer to teach, and superintend the babies on Sundays. Frequently, too, they are generous subscribers to the Parochial Funds. But these merits are not in themselves sufficient to qualify them to excel professional kindergarten mistresses. Skill is necessary in an inverse ratio to the age of the pupils. Zeal is not an adequate substitute for aptitude in the infants' department, where the tendency to desert is greater than in the other section of the school.

(2) If it can be arranged, the little children should assemble on Sundays in the same room; and, if possible, should occupy the same seats that they do throughout the week. One should make use of their

acquired habit of school attendance. Infants are shy and cannot easily find their way about. Moreover, the parents are anxious about them, and afraid of their being lost, or run over. Obviously, therefore, there is very much gained by making use of their habitual week-day attendance at a particular spot.

(3) The infants' Sunday School can be recruited, as I have before remarked, by means of well-organized Font Roll, Cradle Roll, Mothers' Meetings, District Visiting, etc. etc. Clergy, Lay Readers, Bible-women, Sisters, District Nurses, etc. etc., ought all of them to bear a hand in recruiting the Baby School.

When the time comes for the little ones to be promoted to the boys' and girls' departments of the Sunday School, it sometimes happens that many go astray. Occasionally the cause is easily traced to bad management, and lack of co-operation between the various departments. Let me give an illustration of the kind of carelessness to which I refer. I will give an extreme case, and a rare one perhaps. It will, however, indicate what I mean.

After the infants' prayers are over, certain of the little babies are called out of their classes and are informed that they are promoted. The old lady gives certain instructions and then dismisses them reluctantly,—because she loves them. The door is opened; they wander out aimlessly; and the door is shut behind them. They are no longer members of the infants'

school. If they are left to themselves at this point, most of them will go astray, because they have no alternative. Possibly a few adventurous ones may find their way to the upper school, and endeavour vainly to reach the latch of the door. Even if some senior scholar, who is late, opens the door for them, the unaccustomed prospect inside is not inviting, and there is an open sweetshop just outside in the street. But, supposing that they are expected by the upper school, and that a warm welcome awaits them; and assuming that they are escorted thither by one of their own trusted teachers; it does not even then follow that they will care to repeat the visit on the following Sunday—alone. When once they do feel thoroughly at home, they will stay just so long as they continue to feel at home there.

Eventually, there comes a time when they cease to be at ease, because they feel that their school days are over. Naturally, when they leave the Day School they feel that they are too old for Sunday School. The teachers and Superintendents, if they know their business, will catch them with guile before they have thought of running away. With much pomp and ceremony, they will be converted into Bible Class Lads or Bible Class Girls, as the case may be.

But it often happens that there is no available space for the Sunday School to overflow into. What then? Well, it is only mere children who assemble

at the children's hour ; lads and lasses who are no longer children cannot, of course, meet at the same hour as do the infants. Obviously, they deserve, at their age, to have their own special hour, either before or after that fixed for the more humble Sunday School children. The room is at their disposal either before or after school time.

Who is to teach them? They know and love their own teacher, whereas they may not be in the mood to transfer their devotion to another. And so very often the teacher is promoted too. But it may be said that the removal of that teacher reduces the Sunday School staff at a time when there is an influx of infants. Not necessarily. There is the Teachers' Training Class attached to both the boys' and girls' Sunday Schools. It is recruited from the aforementioned Bible Classes. These Teachers' Training Classes not only educate recruits for the teaching staff, but they retain scholars who feel more grown up, etc., than do the members of the Bible Classes. The principle upon which Training Classes are conducted is that the best method of learning anything is to prepare to teach it. Similarly, the best way of becoming anything is to prepare oneself to inspire others to become it. The Teachers' Training Classes have various privileges. The most promising members are occasionally told off to act as monitors to the Sunday School children.

For instance, they may manage the children when on the way to church ; or before school opens ; or at treats, etc. Sometimes when teachers are scarce they are allowed to teach a class of small children. They are at liberty to attend teachers' meetings, and when anything particularly interesting is to take place, they are specially invited to the meeting. These budding teachers are deficient, no doubt, in theological knowledge. Few, if any of them, can repeat the Athanasian Creed quite correctly by heart. But they possess three qualifications which are very valuable, and which are not universally displayed by Sunday School teachers :—

- (1) They know the capacity and the knowledge of children, and are in touch with them. What educationalists endeavour to learn from books on child psychology, these young cadets know from experience, because they are hardly more than children themselves.
- (2) They wield the authority and receive the reverence which is often denied by small children to parents, schoolmasters, and policemen, but which is lavished profusely upon elder brothers and sisters.
- (3) They have recently been educated upon the most modern principles, and have not forgotten how they themselves were taught.

Given half a dozen girls from the Teachers' Training Class and two professional infants' school mis-

tresses, every infants' school may be made a great success.

We constantly hear people deplore the fact that Sunday School scholars desert when they reach a certain age. Let us, then, consider this subject of the overflow from the top classes. It seems to me that we do not have—as a rule—a sufficient number of Bible Classes. Year after year a new one may be shed off from the school, and kept intact by some capable teacher who has gained a hold on the scholars. But perhaps something more than the Sunday Bible Class is necessary to inspire them with esprit de corps, and to keep them together. I cannot here go into details with regard to boys' clubs, lads' clubs, C.L.B., men's clubs, athletic clubs, etc. etc. All these should, however, help each other, and be regarded as parts of the same parochial machinery. Let me give an illustration of what I mean. Apart from the help which e.g. the men's club can give to—let us say—the C.L.B. by lending their best gymnast to coach the lads, or by undertaking to teach them boxing, etc., there are such parochial events as Confirmations. These ought to concern all of the various religious agencies which deal with the young. Representatives of all these should amalgamate to provide a band of fellow-labourers who will attend to this matter, which concerns the whole parish. Even the infants can distribute literature. Even the chronic invalids can pray.

Those who have been confirmed may tell their friends how great things already God has done for them.

Then when the Confirmation is "over" the newly confirmed must not be allowed to drift away. If one does not strike when the iron's hot, one is not justified in grumbling at the fact that when it is cold it is not malleable. Consequently, one enrolls them at once into Communicants' Guilds, which are not necessarily called by that name. One of the chief reasons why so many of the newly confirmed do not become regular communicants is that they are shy. It makes all the difference in the world to them if some one whom they love and respect arranges to meet them at the early service. I have in my mind—amongst other instances—the case of the Captain of the C.L.B. who, after attending all my Confirmation classes for lads, followed up the subject in his conversations with each individual lad in private; addressed them with regard to it at their Bible Class; and met them regularly at the Holy Communion on Sunday. He was a good shepherd, and knew how to lead. Reluctance on the part of some to become regular communicants calls forth the best energies of those who share, in however small a degree, the dogged pertinacity of Him Who pursues the hundredth sheep until He finds it. It needs a great deal of lay help to keep up an adequate amount of regular visiting, etc.; but lay people often complain that the clergy do all

the work. Bearing this in mind, the organizing clergyman constantly impresses upon all, that one of the most important means of grace is work for others. If it is true of man's material body that if it will not work neither shall it eat, it is no less true of his spiritual life that if the latter will not exercise itself in spiritual work for others the appetite for grace will languish.

I cannot conclude without apologizing for having intruded my crude ideas upon the reader, especially as I have had nothing new to say upon this most vexed problem of our day. Also I must ask his pardon for having written in too dogmatic a manner, owing to the fact that the opposite method of expression does not come natural to me, and, therefore, would have been unreal. It is unnecessary for me to add that I have endeavoured to sketch my ideal, and not to describe what I myself could achieve, which is quite another matter. The reason that I have said so little about the importance of the Day School in the work of Religious Education, is that the State has not yet decided that matter. My own attitude towards the problem is of no importance, of course; but I venture to mention that in my opinion the Church of England is National rather than Sectarian and therefore should act as such when dealing with the religious education of the nation.

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